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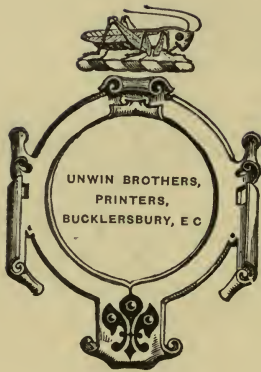


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NIGHT: A POEM.







# NIGHT:

A Poem.

BY

GEORGE GILFILLAN, M. A.,

*Author of "Bards of the Bible," &c., &c.*



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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IN this age of keen religious suspicion, if not of profound religious conviction, the author may perhaps be permitted to premise that certain subjects in the following Poem, such as universal restoration, or rather destructionism, are used entirely for their poetical capabilities, just as, for the same reason, millenarianism has found, in one of the books, an honorary place. In treating such men as Spinoza, Swedenborg, and Shelley, he has sought to extract whatever of the soul of goodness he could find within or about them ; their systems are, he need hardly say, far from being his. On certain topics, however, such as the present position and necessities of the Christian church, he has, in the last book, spoken out his own

mind frankly and fearlessly, and for these portions of his work he asks no deductions, and makes no apology

The Poem is to some extent miscellaneous in its materials, following thus a type which once extensively prevailed in poetry. It is for the public to decide whether the revival of an old form, connected with a new and age-like spirit, deserves encouragement, and to their decision the author will be ready to bow.

DUNDEE,

*25th March, 1867.*

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## NIGHT: A POEM.

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### PROEM.

I SING of Night—a dark, yet noble theme,  
Which on my spirit has for long years lain,  
Adopted as mine own in days of youth,  
And now in manhood's still unfaded strength  
Resumed in mood of earnest fantasy  
And high endeavour, though at times my hope  
Pales like a taper in the morning sun,  
And a cold fear comes shiv'ring o'er my soul,  
Lest the new garland I would strive to fling  
Upon the starry foreheads should decay,  
And vanish as doth fleecy wisp of cloud  
From the proud planets rising in the eve.  
Yet if 'tis glorious in great attempts  
Even to fail, let me such solace sad  
Indulge, nor less continue to admire

The sweet and sable beauties of the Night,  
And leave them with a sigh to future bards,  
Who may embody them in deathless song !  
Spirit, that stirrest in the leaves of night,  
Gleamest and wailest in the evening streams,  
Makest the wood of pines thy deep-strung lyre,  
And twinklest from afar off in the stars,  
Toucheest the ocean into troubled joy,  
Linkest by thy strong breath a thousand hills  
As by a chain, and mixest with our dreams  
Like prophet melody from far-off worlds—  
Come, thou ethereal energetic Breath,  
Inspire my song, and to thy various moods  
Make it responsive, and as echo true ;  
Now soft as whisper of the summer breeze,  
Which dares not break the slumber of the flowers,  
And yet must utter its own secret joy,  
Now rich and ling'ring as the mellow tones  
From grand piano of the pines which come,  
Now solemn as the ocean's evening psalm,  
Now as the midnight tempest loud and wild,  
Now like the lonely wind on lonely heath,  
Sobbing o'er desolations its sad way,  
And now in lyric snatches, brief and strange,  
Heard by the shepherd at the dead of night,  
Who knows not whence they come, nor where they go,  
Nor whether in the earth, or sky they're born—



Too great this largess from thy hand I know,  
Yet ask that some few drops of it may light  
Upon the song of one who long has loved  
And listened to thy voice, and in it found  
The very spring and soul of Poetry !  
I sing of Night—how wide and vast the theme !  
The deep relations of her worlds to God,  
Who thought them out in His eternal mind,  
Then made them by the spirit of His mouth ;  
The false yet splendid dreams of early days,  
Which long Night's nature real concealed from men,  
Grandly eclipsing our grand modern facts ;  
The stars glassed on the mirror of the eye ;  
Those higher orbs the telescope reveals,  
The immensities enclosed in Rosse's tube,  
Even as the worlds of matter and of mind,  
Of science, letters, and philosophy  
In elemental volume silent lie,  
Or as the inverted heights and depths of life  
Slumber within the unlifted microscope ;  
The joys which mingle with the shades of Night,  
Like flowers amidst the dark locks of a bride ;  
The terrors which the mind part gathers from,  
Part lends to Eve and Midnight's gloomy hours ;  
The mighty sages who Night's secrets found,  
The bards, who set these secrets into song,  
Or wore at least Night's livery dim and drear,

In unison with those unhappy men,  
Who darkness loved have better than the light,  
And said to moral Midnight, "Thou'rt our Day!"  
The darkness of the soul, and of the world,  
Which Night doth typify in symbol strong ;  
And that bright era when the shade shall pass  
From face of man, and earth, and heaven at once,  
And peace between the universe and God  
Shall make the Night and Day alike divine.  
Such are the subjects of my varied song !  
This strain I dedicate in first to man—  
Great man ! whose soul can take up all the stars,  
As but a little thing, and crave for more !  
Who knows himself so great he will not kneel  
To one, to any, or to all Night's orbs,  
Who worships only God, and feels himself  
And Night are both from the One Spirit sprung,  
But he, the nearer, dearer, nobler child,  
While other creatures cower beneath the stars,  
Or look upon them with lack-lustre eye,  
Who loves them, names them, maps them out in heaven,  
Their history reads, their hidden laws explores,  
Their glory sings, and on their flaming shrines  
Presents his homage to the Father-God ;  
Nay, puts the Day-Star\* in his crucible,

\* See the late researches about the spectrum of the sun, through which an iron element has been detected in his beams.

And tortures out the secrets of his heart,  
Making his atmosphere his birth betray,  
And finding iron in his fiery mine,  
So that the pismire man islanded here,  
Can "turn and wind" the Pegasus of heaven,  
And tell his progress for a million years !  
I dedicate again this strain to God :  
The All-pervading Everliving One,  
Whom I have praised in magnifying man,  
Since all within his soul, or great, or good,  
Comes from the bounteous Parent of the whole,  
And must to Him return e'en as the spark  
Sooner or later joins again the sun ;  
Thou unspent, always burning Sun of souls !  
Thou Guide of men and angels, worms and worlds,  
From the supremest of the seraph throng,  
Who stands with face unbared alone in heaven,  
While all his kindred theirs veil with their wings,  
To the last link of animated life  
Which o'er the abyss hangs trembling like a leaf,  
O'er autumn's deep and tempest-darken'd stream—  
Thou Light upon the brow of every star !  
Thou Star within the soul of every man !  
Thou Unseen Glory, who all seen bedims !  
Father of Day ! Father of Night ! whose praise  
With endless emulation both do sing !  
Father of man, my Father, hope and joy,

Preparing for us in the future worlds  
A destiny no eye hath ever seen,  
Nor hath it ever yet been heard by ear,  
Nor by the strongest thought been e'er conceived,  
Procured, and sealed, and testified by Christ ;  
Before Thy feet this song I lowly lay !

BOOK FIRST.

NIGHT AND GOD.

## ARGUMENT OF FIRST BOOK.

**T**HE original Solitude of God—The Procession of Ideas through the Divine Mind, namely, The two original Atoms. The Fire-mist—the Creation produced from it in the course of vast ages. The gradual peopling of earth from the lowest to the highest forms of life. The arrival of Man. The God-Man and His completed work. The (supposed) Angel-Man of the far future. God All in All. Dream of the absorption of the Universe into God.

## BOOK FIRST.

### NIGHT AND GOD.

“TO Thee alike the Darkness and the Day:”

Thus speaks the oldest of the Hebrew Bards.

The brightest day to God is only night,  
The darkest night is day, and both are one  
To His all-searching eye, all-sounding mind.  
He made the day ; He also made the night,  
And all the stars from His warm bosom came,  
And haply to His bosom may return.  
Essay at least, we now the awful themes,  
God *ere*, God *in*, God *after* all His works.

Before one star or atom of the worlds  
Was made, God was alone, yet not alone :  
In soul a solitude there never was,  
And how much less in Him—the Soul of souls.  
Speak we of any as a lonely man,

And liken him to solitary sun ?  
'Tis only the faint semblance of a truth ;  
For as the sun his own companion is,  
So with each soul among the human race,  
'Tis never less alone than when alone.  
The madman's secret cell o'erflows with dreams,  
The captive cries, "More room for teeming guests !"  
The banished man creates his company,  
And finds Fernandez, St. Helena full ;  
The little maid, resorting to the school  
From day to day, through solitary woods,  
Is compassed by a host of angel-thoughts.  
To be is to be with not one, but two,  
That strange and mystic being we call Self,  
And Him we know as Universal Soul,  
Who listens in all silence, speaks in sound,  
Is ever near and ever far away,  
Present alike in heaven and in hell,  
In secret of His glory in the skies,  
And in the centre of devouring fires !  
But long before the universe was made,  
God in Himself had sweet society ;  
And in the great ideas of His mind,  
Found friendship, glory, joy unspeakable !

How fine to watch a thought in a great mind  
Rising like morning cloud upon the face !



To see how first, ere born, it knits the brow,  
And casts around it a prophetic shade,  
As from a hoary oak or pine behind ;  
Then how it lightens and expands the eye,  
Like goblet suddenly filled full with wine,  
Then how it kindles on the lips a smile,  
Compounded half of pleasure, half of pride ;  
Then how the man who still as statue sate  
Springs up as from the pressure of a spell,  
And runs out restless to the woods and fields,  
Happy as king upon his nuptial day,  
Preceded, yet pursued by a new thought,  
As real as rock, as gorgeous as dream,  
As bread nutritious, and as nectar sweet :  
No moment in the life of man like this ;  
It is the virgin moon of intellect—  
It is an hour dropped from the days of Heaven !  
And so (if we may dare comparison),  
But infinitely more the joy of God,  
As in Eternity He dwelt alone,  
Surrounded by innumerable thoughts,  
All new, all good, though not alike in light,  
Like autumn sun midst chequered clouds of morn.

Some say that God never began to make :  
But making was from all Eternity,  
Pouring out worlds like bright waves from a source,

Like sunbeams from a sun flashing out day ;  
That light, God's shadow, is as old as He,  
But this, a thought no finite mind can form,  
More consonant to reason to believe  
That on a certain hour, God's thought began  
To clothe itself in fact—the first fact, Light.  
First, midst, and last, nay, only child of God ;  
For light, and life, and glory are the same,  
Like root, and stalk, and flower upon one tree,  
And that before the forming Word was spoke  
God was, save for His teeming thoughts, alone.

Of "secret-place of thundering" we hear—  
The shrine of fire within the cloud of storm—  
Secret, but far from silent in its gloom,  
Burning and beating like some awful heart ;  
But who shall venture without fear t' approach,  
Though only with the snow-still foot of thought,  
The ancient Temple of the "Secret One,"  
Through which Ideas seem to rise like stars,  
And write the prophecy of All to come ?  
Gaze up with trembling, intermittent look,  
To that unutterable sky of God,  
And see upon its vivid blackness gleam  
One solitary spark, like grain of sand,  
Yet shining like a thousand gems in one :  
That is the seed of this great Universe,

The infant-parent of the Heavens and Earth.  
It sparkles like a star within the Plough,  
When dwindled by the moon to small sharp point,  
Sparkles in speechless solitude until  
Another little light begins to shine,  
Lovelier and more minute than even the first,  
And 'twixt the two the mighty Whole begins.

In dance and song began the Universe,  
Though small the dance, and tiny was the song  
As that of insects on the evening breeze,  
A fairy dance for microscopic eyes ;  
For microscopic ears a fairy song !  
Yet graceful as the motion of two sprites  
Wedded, and footing out their measure fine  
In song and dance began the Universe,  
And from that mazy motion ne'er has swerved,  
And in that song persisteth ever still,  
With richer cadence and more powerful swell,  
Audible only to the ear of God,  
Visible only to His searching eye,  
But beautiful and real as God Himself.

Out of the bosom of that fertile Twain,  
In course of ages, which no number have,  
Came forth the Fire-mist of that early time—  
A mighty sea of vapour, floating on,

The shadow of the substance yet to be,  
Which burning, brooding, bursting into life,  
The Chaos and the Spirit seems in one,  
Although, distinct as matter is from soul.  
Not silent all, for hark ! a whispered sound  
Like that of budding forests in the spring,  
Tells of the wondrous birth beginning there,  
A soft sweet flutter in that sea of fire,  
Speaking of progress, motion, growth, and power  
Concentred, thought in act, and life in bloom,  
Till after long millenniums have past,  
In centre of a thick and misty mass  
Appears a rounded glory—'tis a sun !  
A haloed orb, like pictured head of Christ,  
Burred with the relict-beams from which he sprang,  
His splendour sharing, testifying birth,  
And clothing his bald head with lustre rich ;  
And, at the moment when that sun is born,  
Millions like him appear in depths of space—  
The spring stupendous of Igdrasil's tree !\*  
See how these giants, with their crowns of gold,  
Pursue their swift and strong imperial march,  
And how these crowns and rings in time condense,  
And solid gems and planet-worlds become  
Revolving ever round their parents old,

\* Igdrasil. The Scandinavian name for the universe, under the figure of a tree.

And paying them a tribute uncompelled  
Of loving worship, and of circling song.  
And thus the universe by God is thought,  
In all its height, and depth, and breadth, and length,  
And as He sees it mirrored in His mind,  
He says, "It is and shall be very good."  
Made is creation in the soul of God,  
But still unoccupied and empty all,  
A glorious wilderness of barren fire,  
And matter semi-solid, barren too,  
But destined yet to teem and swarm with life.  
See o'er the great Creator's loving eye  
Pass (like the animals in Eden once,  
Before our father's watching, wondering look)  
All the ideal forms of coming life,—  
The shell-fish, with its bubble being small,  
Its short weak gasp, called life, and tremble soft ;  
The insect, microscopic in its size,  
But perfect in its every joint and limb,  
A vivified and finished atomling,  
Proving that miniatures from the Great Hand  
Are equal to the largest, loftiest prints,  
And that in tiniest of the Maker's works  
Their being and their beauty are the same,  
And life and form go ever hand in hand ;  
From blended gloom and mud the reptiles sprung,  
Peopling dark corners, solitary spots,

Obscure, indeed, in meaning as abode ;  
And yet, though foul and dark, forming a link  
In Being's complicated, boundless chain ;  
The gelid fishes, in the gelid sea,  
Alike in calm and storm for ever dumb,  
Old Ocean's passive and smooth-gliding sons,  
Or the blood-specked, clear-scaled, fin-winged, and swift,  
Beautiful children of the beauteous streams ;  
The mighty monsters and fantastic births,  
Which science in the fossil worlds has found—  
Saurians and dragons, pterodactyles huge ;  
Rainbows of hell, the serpents in their pride,  
Their dreadful beauty and their slimy wiles,  
Their treasured venom and their sceptre sting,  
The wild wreathed margin of great Nature's book,  
Glaring askance upon the crowded page ;  
The tenants of the ever-teeming main,  
The whale, mild despot of the hoary deep,  
Large as some dream of giant ere the flood,  
Shy as a mermaid in a summer sea,  
So strangely diverse from the finny tribe,  
That one might deem him dropt, in days gone past,  
From Jupiter, that planet sea on high ;  
The heavy walrus, in his norland haunts,  
Seeking the lonely shores and coldest seas,  
All mild and harmless till he hunted be ;  
Then turning like a demon on his foes,

Gnashing his tusks, and tearing them in ire ;  
The shark pursuing aye his purpose fell,  
A fish-shaped fury, haunting all the main,  
And other forms, and miscreations foul  
(So we may call them in our ignorance),  
Extinct, or dwelling still in spongy caves,\*  
And waiting with the patience of those rocks,  
Doomed to descend upon the heads of men  
Through mighty ages, for their victims few ;  
The large and lovely family of birds,  
Elastic tenants of the liquid air—  
Here fiery-feathered as in tropic climes,  
There dull in plumage, sweet and strong in voice ;  
Here winged gems in splendour and in size,  
There masses of half-animated snow,  
Sailing the night with white and noiseless wings ;  
Here with the vulture dark, digesting blood,  
Upon a moonlit crag in Himmaleh,  
There with the eagle, screaming in the teeth  
Of a loud-screaming Pyrenæan storm,  
Or from old Atlas, meeting Afric's sun,  
And tossing a red tribute in his face  
From blazing eyeball and from fire-tipt beak ;  
And there, again, with raven sinking down,  
Like fragment of a black star on the heath,

\* "Spongy Caves."

See VICTOR HUGO'S "Workers of the Sea."

Or sitting gorged upon the breast of corpse,  
Half sleeping, like a sated Destiny ;  
And there, again, with dove, her feathers clothed  
With whitest silver and with yellow gold,  
While beauty, round her neck of changing hue,  
Breaks softly ever like a summer wave :  
The apes' ambiguous and eccentric race,  
Humbling men by their likeness to themselves,  
Strange travesties of man's commanding form ;  
The vaster, loftier animals of earth—  
Rhinoceros, earth-shaking elephant,  
Dethronèd monarchs of the early world,  
Relics of a Saturnian dynasty ;  
Beasts of all forests in their fury strong,  
Like flames incarnate, ranging o'er the earth ;  
The lion, hot as if from furnace sprung,  
Seeking a blood-bath for his raging fit ;  
Hunger gone mad, the splendid tiger next ;  
The leopard, specked as by some meteor shower ;  
The panther, restless as he trode on flame ;  
The wolf, a lost and ever-yelling wind ;  
The bear a monstrous mass of lazy fire ;  
The tamer, milder creatures of the world—  
The gentle lamb, the largest flower of spring,  
Largest and sweetest snow-drop of the year ;  
The sheep, simplicity in perfect shape,  
With the first element of music, tracked



To her monotonous yet plaintive bleat;  
The dog, man's faithful friend and follower,  
Friendly and following, as though of old  
Their spirits had been paired in some far clime,  
Like those of Lara and his Kaled dear,  
Who had been Conrade and Gulnare of yore :  
Next man himself ; next, but perhaps not last,  
Appearing sudden in the wondrous scale,  
But long expected and prepared for there,  
In mind the very image of his God ;  
Large-thoughted, loving, and yet led by law,  
With every attribute condensed in one  
Deep faculty which mind but faintly names ;  
In temperament the fulness of all life,  
The lion's boldness, and the tiger's wrath ;  
The camel's patience, and the lamb's meek love ;  
The dog's sagacity and eagle's fire,  
United, softened, and together held  
By the great signet of the human heart,  
As if by God's ne'er to be broken seal,  
And by the sceptre of the sovereign soul :  
In form, a form not less magnificent  
Because in crudest promise seen before  
In the abortive ape, or monkey mean ;  
But in the man, transfigured into power,  
Exalted beauty, perfect symmetry,  
And wedded to a soul as it erect,

And glowing with a bright immortal fire,  
But in his will marked out for doubtful ends ;  
His will at once his weakness and his strength,  
A heart-valve 'tween the tides of heaven and hell,  
And which by turns has oped to both a way ;  
And still, even in his fall he's glorious.  
Low but majestic, though most strangely formed  
Of contradictions and antitheses,  
With head of gold and feet of miry clay,  
One half of dust, one half of deity ;  
Touching the angel here, and there the brute,  
Here " thoughts that wander through eternity,"  
There passions sounding all the sties of time ;  
His rooted selfishness and lofty love,  
His little life, his princely intellect,  
His pure desires, his hateful selfishness,  
His deeds of darkness, and his thoughts of light ;  
His form and bearing, stately as a God's,  
His hair now raven-black, now bushy gold,  
His brow a hill of smooth and shining snow,  
His eye arriving ever, like a star,  
From deep abysses, with new light and life ;  
His voice a music from a cavern dim,  
Thought ferrying out upon a silver stream ;  
His foot an arch of triumph o'er the earth,  
His heart a restless ruby set in flesh,  
His moral nature like a central throne,

A miniature of the great judgment-seat :  
His genius, like the lost light in a cave,  
Glimpsing out tidings of the sun without,  
Or, like that wondrous spectrum of our day,  
Catching the photograph of distant worlds,  
Piercing all veils, and sounding every sky ;  
His soul, sitting in state above the whole,  
Like dome receiving light direct from heaven,  
While passion in a black and turbid pool  
Now sullen sleeps, and now in fury heaves  
Around, as if all Tophet lay below,  
And while before him stretch old age and death,  
The long, long silence, and the wormy shroud,  
And the Amen carved on the lonely tomb !  
Such man we deem him as he was and is ;  
But nobler far shall be his destiny,  
When he who bore the image of the first  
Shall of the second Adam bear the stamp.  
And, lo ! He beameth on the sky of God,  
The great Immanuel, heaven's masterpiece,  
Like one brought up with, and His daily joy,  
His only born and well-beloved Son,  
His equal and inferior, less and one,  
Mysterious birth, and highest thought of God ;  
Behold and marvel at this marvellous One,  
Uniting in Himself all elements  
Of good and great, and gracious, and true ;

Man as He was, in part man as He is,  
And with divinity besides within,  
Adam's original perfection high,  
With sympathy for human ill combined,  
Coming so near the gulf in which man fell,  
As He could hear the wailing of his woe,  
The gnashing of his teeth and piteous sighs,  
Yet drop not over—nay, but higher spring,  
Stronger from the abasement, abler now,  
Tempted himself, to succour those that fall ;  
Secure from sinning by the golden link  
Of life Divine which binds Him to God's Self ;  
Crowned King of Men with thorns instead of gems,  
A reed for sceptre and a cross for throne ;  
And round Him see when He has reached the sky,  
And found His Father's glory waiting Him,  
And grasped the sceptre of infinitude,  
(Angels beneath Him cast, like shining sands,  
Beneath the eye of Teneriffe's far peak,  
Upon the tropic sea !) 'gin to collect  
His Church of children first-born from the earth  
By the strong magnet of His power and love,  
Till like some central star of Night he sits  
Surrounded by ten thousand million orbs,  
In His beams basking ; to His will conformed,  
The purpose of His Father now fulfilled,  
That matter and that mind shall be at one,

And that the Apex high of all the worlds,  
Should be of God in Christ the cross-shaped Throne !

All this we know from Holy Writ shall be,  
And must in God's mind first have been conceived ;  
This is reality, what follows dream,  
For some there be who vault to farther thoughts,  
And speak of a day coming when 'bove man  
Shall rise a nobler, more celestial shape,  
The angel of a new and better world,  
The complement of woman and of man,  
Combining all the wisdom of the one,  
And all the other's grace and loveliness,  
The flower consummate of the human race,  
And then once more may angels walk the earth,  
And be its only tenants—Man absorbed  
In his own higher child, diviner seed,  
And think that the fine vision serves to cast  
A gleam upon the mountain tops of earth ;  
And show beneath the clouds feet as of fire,  
The softest fire of autumn's softest eve,  
Preparing to come down and rest thereon ;  
Nay, as in Endor's mystic cave of old,  
“ Gods rising out of earth ” to them appear !

Within the Holy Book itself a word  
Of deep unfathomable glory shines !—

Shines and defies approach like a strong flame,  
 Threat'ning to scorch the hand which dares draw near.  
 "Then also shall the Son Himself to God  
 Be subject, and the Father shall be All  
 In All," as when He dwelt Himself alone ;  
 Sublime conception—be it, as some deem,  
 Prophetic of divine deliverance  
 Of man and matter from their varied ills,  
 Creation from its "vanity"\* redeemed :  
 Redemption work complete and yielded up  
 To Him who formed the first conception great ;  
 Or be it as old sages wont to dream,  
 (And as a solemn thought of earnest men,  
 Without receiving, let us it record,)  
 That as from God all things came forth at first,  
 So unto Him shall all things yet return.

Annihilated? No, only absorbed ;  
 Even as the earth and rain become the rose,  
 The garden worm awakes a butterfly,  
 The sullen coal is changed to flowery flame,  
 The iron winter turns to leafy spring,  
 And the dull food men must perforce consume  
 Becomes the lustre of the poet's eye,  
 And the rich radiance of the beauty's check :  
 So said these sages of the early time ;

\* "Vanity."—See Romans viii.

All powers and properties, all forms and shapes,  
Must their perfection find in God Himself,  
And melt down in the ocean of His love,  
Enriching Him who was so rich before ;  
Melted, but lost not more than are the streams  
Lost in th' engulfing hospitable sea,  
Or than the grain is lost which earth receives  
And renders back with golden usury,  
When Autumn, like a Conscience, awes the world,  
And makes it yield the loan which Spring had made.

To music did the universe arise—  
In music shall the universe dissolve ;  
A long deep wailing yet triumphant strain,  
Like that of battle eve, when victory  
Blendeth its note with that of mourning low,  
“Return to Me !”\* the burden of the song,  
“To Me, your Father, Centre, Friend, and Home !”  
Down through the ages rolls the solemn sound,  
And at each note of the omnific strain  
Race after race returns to God again :  
First the grim creatures of the early prime  
Have long since rendered up their ugly shapes ;  
Then shall the present forms of hideous life,  
Spiders and scorpions and the serpent brood,  
Sink, their work done, into their Maker's sea ;

\* “Return.” See Psalm xc. 3. “Return, ye children of men.”

Next all the finny race shall melt away ;  
And then the fierce and fiery brutal tribes,  
Quite spent and chilled, shall find in God their rest ;  
Next those all-beautiful and wingèd shapes,  
Those singing sunbeams, living rainbows bright,  
Shall add that stream of sound which is their soul,  
To the Great Fountain whence it first out rolled,  
And even *their* little life in God be found.  
Then hark ! more deeply doth the music swell,  
“ Ye sons of men, return, lay down your crowns  
At My feet, at My feet your burdens lay ;  
Upon My bosom rest your weary heads,  
Yet not to die, but to begin to live  
In boundless bliss, and deep and dream-like rest,  
Pillowed upon your Father and your God ;”  
And human life, like vapour in the sun,  
Shivers, disperses, is dissolved and lost !  
“ Return, ye angels, who are flames of fire,  
Ethereal creatures—halfway up to God  
Already, clear the gulf and be in Him  
For ever :” and like bright clouds of the sky,  
Merged in the morning, do the angels pass.  
“ Return, thou earth, itself my tired-out child,  
Weary with wand’ring round the distant sun,  
And never coming nearer to his seat :”  
And this great globe, the world, lays down her head  
Upon the lap of God, and is no more.



“Return, strong sun, to Him who crowned thy brow  
With a beam borrowed from His glorious throne  
And ye, ye stars, restore to me your light,  
Yield up the teeming treasures of your breasts,  
And change to silence deep your ancient songs.”  
I looked, and all the eyes of heaven were shut,  
And God again was by Himself alone !



BOOK SECOND.

NIGHT AND MAN.

## ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

MAN, favourite child of Nature and Night—Pre-Adamite Night—Arrival of Man—His first experience of Night—Night among Primeval Tribes—Chaldean Astronomers—Framing of the Constellations—Worship of the Stars—Hymn to Fire—Astrology—Varied relations of the Stars and Man.

## BOOK SECOND.

### NIGHT AND MAN.

I WOKE, and cried, "Thank God, 'tis but a dream,  
For there the stars are still, all calm and bright,  
And Man beneath them, gazing out his heart  
Into their beautiful and flaming eyes.  
And let me now returned from that bold flight  
Into the far-off mysteries of God,  
The secrets slumbering in the womb of Time,  
Glance next at Night, and Man's relations strange."

High favourite of Night Man ever was,  
He breathes most freely 'neath her glowing vault—  
Like Tartar horse on the dark steppe let loose,  
Who snorts for joy, erects his bristling mane,  
Leaps, curvets, gallops, lifts his fearless eye,  
As if it sought to shine a star 'mongst stars,

And doth the ground devour for very joy :  
Like such transfigured steed, 'neath Night, is Man !  
Whether upon a winter hill he stands,  
With silent stars twinkling in millions round ;  
Or whether from a mine he springs, and finds  
The August day he left turned August night,  
With moon the centre of unnumbered orbs,  
Warm shining in the clear but sultry air ;  
Or whether on the evening deck he sees,  
At once, in sky and sea, in thousands come  
Their shadows and the stars—how lovely both !  
Some trembling through the shrouds, while others stand  
Above the masts, like lone and lofty lamps,  
And others dash their golden fragments small  
In waves upon the vessel's heaving sides ;  
Or whether at the telescope he kneels,  
A friendly spy, and notes, with lover's look,  
(As though one gazed through loophole at a ball,)  
The graceful dances of these fairy orbs,  
His soul is ever ready to leap up  
And shout, " Eureka," in the Midnight's ear,  
" I've found my element, my field, my home !"   
And most when seems a wind among the stars,  
Stirring their surges like a foaming sea,  
Crossed, too, by meteors and by falling orbs,  
Then Man resembles one who had been born,  
And spent his boyish days on ocean's brink,

But banished inwards till maturer years :  
When, lo ! upon a blust'ring autumn eve,  
He sees again his mother in her ire,  
And keen the joy with which that lioness,  
Who bore and dandled him on her fierce knees,  
He hails, and feels she is his mother still,  
As warm, as wilful, full of rage and love—  
Thus Man's mind rears and rises to the stars  
When moved, it deemeth, by the breath of power.

The Night and early Man now let us sing.  
Ere Man appeared upon this ambient globe,  
Night nor a mystery nor a terror was,  
Neither an admiration nor a joy ;  
No soul had mirrored it, no song had praised.  
For ages, which to number were to be  
A god, the canopy on high had hung  
As beautiful and beaming as 'tis now,  
As rich and crowded with unnumbered orbs.  
The Milky Way was old—the Pleiades  
Were weeping for their mate—the Gemini  
Were fondling in the air—Arcturus stern,  
Was glooming upon Sirius, as he rose ;  
But all on earth was rude and infant life,  
And not a voice was heard to say, “ Ye shine ! ”  
The mailed devourers, darting through the deep,  
Dived for their prey, and looked not up to stars.

Buried amidst the forests of the prime,  
That gorgeous flora of the early world,  
With all its mighty pines and tall tree ferns,  
There lurked some timid reptiles, which to heaven  
Ne'er raised one awestruck or admiring eye.  
Then came the age of monsters in the deep,  
And in the sky, and on the slimy shores ;  
Heavy the air with wings of giant birds,  
Enormous eggs lay scattered 'mong the rocks,  
Crawled along lizards, large as nightmare dreams,  
Like rifts in crags gaped angry crocodiles,  
Mountains in motion trampled elephants,  
With horror-breeding forms the sea was full ;  
Unmeasured ugliness the lord of earth,  
What could it know or feel of lovely heaven ?  
Or if it howled when some unwonted light,  
Some sudden glare of moon or meteor shone,  
What tribute was there in that dismal sound,  
Compounded of all harsh and grating jars,  
To these serene and ever-smiling skies ?  
Then, as the flora sunk, the fauna rose  
Thick, till the earth appeared one grisly den ;  
Tigers tremendous in the thickets lurked,  
Hanging their eyes upon them like wild fruit,  
And making restless rainbows as they moved ;  
Held his fierce way the horned rhinoceros,  
The mammoth dragged behind his earthquake slow ;



The towering elk saw at the open cave,  
All grimly grinning, the hyena stand ;  
Coiled in his den, the massive bear lay still,  
His fur a forest, brown and densely piled,  
Careless in sleep of the wild thunder near,  
Made by a hundred mastodons in flight ;  
While lolling in his mud, and snorting deep,  
The hippopotamus luxurious lay :  
But not one eye 'mid these to see the stars,  
And not one tongue to syllable their praise !

But Man, at last appeared—a wondrous day,  
An era in the annals of the earth,  
A landmark in the history of God !  
An eye in the blind universe—a voice  
In the all dumb creation he arose.  
I see him, starting from primeval sleep,  
Upon a mountain summit, all alone,  
The sunrise shining on his new-lit eye,  
The ocean near, with circle vast of hills,  
Steep rising round, and groves and fields below :  
But these he notes not—on the sun alone  
He rests his wond'ring, pleased, insatiate look,  
Till the strong magnet in the burning beam  
Him from his soft and prostrate couch uplifts,  
And makes him raise aloft his arms to heaven ;  
The while a sound breaks from his opened lips,

First murmur of a coming sea of praise !  
All day he hangs upon the sov'reign orb,  
Deeming him what he cannot say or think,  
And vainly trying e'en to touch the fringe  
Of his bright garment, till, behold, he sets,  
Sets in a moment ! and the night succeeds,  
And floods with glory all the tropic sky.  
No time for terror or for sorrow loud,  
Another tide of beauty bathes Man's soul,  
And Night becomes still dearer than the day,  
The sun his father, but his sisters these,  
The sweet and lovely tremblers ; while a wind,  
Cooling his brow, comes, as if sent by them,  
To whisper love across the midnight deep,  
And sleep's soft seal stamps him in dream their own !

How dear the stars unto the desert-born—  
To all primeval tribes have ever been,  
Who every night have the first night renewed,  
And felt themselves of the first man the joy !  
The lonely Redman in the western woods,  
Leaning upon a log his weary head,  
Turns up his face to these resplendent orbs,  
Which like the eyes of the Great Spirit gleam,  
And in fine reverie forgets to sleep,  
As if to close his eyes on such a sky  
Till he has drunk its glory to the depths

Were blasphemy against the Maker high.  
The savage on the far Pacific deep,  
Storm-driven, cloud darkened in his light canoe,  
When the cloud breaks, and he beholds the stars,  
Feels they are friends, and howls his wild delight.  
The Icelander exalted on his sledge,  
Careering through his native wilderness,  
What with the glimmer of eternal snow,  
What with the rain from Hecla's crest of flame,  
What with the riot of the Northern Lights,  
What with the glitter of the frosted stars,  
Feels his heart dance with gladness as he cries,  
"This is the noblest night the eye can see!"  
The fleet Bohemian, banished and forlorn,  
Son of the sand, the scapegoat of the race,  
Driven to the wilds like demon to the deep,  
Denying Godhead, and detesting man,  
Hath yet one friend, and 'tis a friend in heaven,  
Hath yet one pilot on the trackless waste,  
Hath yet one object he divine doth deem,  
Hath yet one eye bent on his orphanhood ;  
It is the bright star of Aldebaran,  
With whose paternal flame he hopes to mix,  
When Death hath stripped the sandals from his feet,  
And torn his red and shallow turban off.  
So still in later days the shepherd lone,  
Feeding his sheep upon old Snowdon's sides,

With a peculiar love watches the stars,  
And is the Night's chronologer and bard.

And yet on plains, not mountains, shepherds first  
Began to name, and sought to mete the stars.  
Upon those eastern, wide, and flowery plains,  
Circling Euphrates with its volume vast :  
Now drear and desolate, then fresh and young,  
The Chaldee herdsmen watching their clear heavens,  
Drew the first parallel of that great siege,  
Which ever since has 'neath the skies been laid,  
The liquid, shrinking, inward—rolling skies !  
Slowly the Constellations have been formed,  
Experience and Fancy joining hands  
Have traced their figures, writ their names in heaven.  
First on the ecliptic broad twelve signs were fixed,  
Through which the year describes its circling path,  
In the Ram blustering in the Bull more mild,  
In the Twins loving as the month of May,  
In Cancer and in Leo burning fierce ;  
In Virgo beautiful as Autumn's self,  
Trembling in Libra with the Equinox,  
That balance fine between the night and day ;  
In Scorpio cold, serene, and humid oft,  
In Sagittarius darting meteors wild,  
In Capricornus hoary with the frost,  
Shrouded in dim Aquarius with snow,

And in the Pisces showery as the spring.  
Then other Constellations rose in view,  
And took their stations in the ample skies ;  
The Great Bear towered upon the northern height,  
The Dragon writhed around, and Pegasus  
In everlasting flight panted and neighed ;  
Hercules\* laid his hand upon the stars,  
And drew them after in his rapid flight,  
Even as he dragged Geryon's flocks of old ;  
The Arrow flew toward its viewless aim,  
Boötes round the zenith led his dogs,  
The Swan pursued her soft and gliding way,  
The Serpent spread his many-folded coils,  
The Eagle soared aloft with fiery wing,  
And not the meanest of the shining throng,  
The Lyre her strings swayed to the touch of God.

Sing now, O Muse ! the worship of the stars,  
That grand old Parsee worship in the past !  
Prometheus, it is said, snatched fire from heaven,  
And then fell down and worshipped his own torch.  
Prometheus the first Parsee let us name,  
Because he thought the slave whom he had stolen  
Far greater than himself, his earthsprung lord ;

\* All our scheme of stars is supposed to be moving toward a point in the constellation Hercules (see 4th Book). The tenth labour of Hercules was bringing to Argos the flocks of Geryon, the king of Gades, which fed on human flesh.

And from that hour when fire began to twine,  
Like bright tame snake among the haunts of men,  
To roast the hunter's food, to warm his limbs,  
To cheer his cottage, and to light his path,  
To shine upon the long locks of his bride,  
He turned his love into idolatry,  
And built an altar to the flaming power :  
Even the volcano had his votaries,  
Who looked in wonder at his blazing woe,  
And deemed it was the torment of a god ;  
The very glowworm shed a sacred light  
Within her petty sphere, the firefly, too,  
Seemed a diminished angel in the night :  
But next the question rose—whence is this fire ?  
Did not Prometheus bring it down from heaven,  
And is it not in heaven burning still ?  
Ungrateful we who while the streams we love,  
Neglect their far-off fountains in the sky ;  
And then the worship of the stars began ;  
Like fiery cross along old Scotland's hills,  
Now climbing, sinking now, then running fast,  
O'er heaths and marshes, and o'er level plains,  
The early electricity of war ;  
So Fire himself ran singing his own fame,  
Celestial egotist ! from hill to hill ;  
Cresting the mountains, burning deep in vales ;  
And chief on the first morn of May his beam,

Lifting up broad against the rising sun.  
And now we listen to that surging sound,  
From hundred hills in Beltane flame produced,  
And thus interpret it into a hymn  
Such as some Persian might have sung in praise :—

## HYMN TO FIRE.

ANCIENT and eternal Fire,  
Unto thee I string my lyre,  
And sing thy power supreme ;  
God within and over all,  
Thee undoubtingly I call,  
All else to thee is dream !  
Rapid, restless in thy course,  
Strong, resistless in thy force,  
Wild panther of the sky ;  
Springing o'er black gulfs of night  
In thy swift and furious might,  
Without or term or tie ;  
Pressing forward in thy sweep,  
Gaining ever on the deep,  
Fearlessly plunging on,  
Darkness before, and light behind,  
Thou flashest, and art gone !  
Still wave on wave, as from an eye  
Pour thy billows through the sky  
Nor ever rest or pause ;  
Always changing, ne'er delaying,  
They with tireless tongue are saying,  
“ Ours are eternal laws ! ”

Foe tremendous! friend sincere!  
Thou the cottage-hearth dost cheer,  
    And the palace burnest ;  
In the mountain's entrails thou  
Plantest pangs that scorch his brow,  
    And him to Tophet turnest ;  
Dreadful art thou in thy course,  
Mystic, distant in thy source,  
    Yet fruitful too, and kind,  
Nursing nature with thy beam,  
Pouring daylight on thy stream,  
    Feeding all human kind.  
Beauty on thy steps attendeth,  
Love with thee her nature blendeth,  
    With thee in hand she goes ;  
Thine the rainbow's starry arch,  
Thine the seasons' ceaseless march,  
    And thine the blushing rose ;  
The milk of motherhood is thine,  
And the virgin's blush divine,  
    And the young lover's rage ;  
Thine on the poet's brow the flush,  
And thine the wild and fervent gush  
    Of heart which fires his page :  
Thou swim'st undrowned the blood of men,  
Thou lurkest in the lions' den,  
    And breathest in his breath ;  
Thou gleamest on the serpent's skin,  
Thou edgest, too, the sabre keen,  
    Barbest the shaft of death.  
All precious stones through thee are bright,  
Sitting in their central night,  
    The wonders of the mine ;



Thine, too, the sea's phosphoric waves,  
And thine the deep and sparry caves,  
    Though shivering they shine ;  
The rich red clouds of morn and even,  
Praise thee in the Autumn heaven,  
    The while the ripened grain  
Sending back thy light and power  
In an upward rushing shower,  
    Asserts thy golden reign.  
Eternal snow itself from thee  
Derives its stern divinity,  
    From thee its glitt'ring sheen,  
As towering in the Andes high,  
It seems to fret the blue-black sky  
    With thousand needles keen.  
They say that these serene abodes  
Are temples of the living gods  
    Exalted 'bove the earth,  
Because at even and morn they shine  
With the lustre half divine  
    To which thou, Fire, giv'st birth !  
The earth appears a dull, cold clod,  
With scorn rejecting thee as god,  
    All save those faithful slaves,  
Etna, Vesuvius, and the rest  
Which love thee, worship thee the best,  
    With their labouring waves.  
No ! for within that cold, dull globe,  
With mountain border, grassy robe,  
    There beats a burning heart,  
Traitor to it, but true to thee,  
And which, on opportunity,  
    Shall take its parent's part,

And burn, but burn not earth alone,  
 But all the works that are thereon,  
     Man, Nature, in one pyre,  
 Proclaiming in a thunder strain  
 Once, and again, and yet again,  
     Thy glorious godhead, Fire!

Though far and independent seemed the stars  
 To early Man's half-wake unaided eye,  
 Rolling above him in their glowing cars,  
 Yet bound they were to him by sympathy,  
 As though they had been human once themselves,  
 And still his genii and guardians were.  
 Sublime the dream of Man, his task complete,  
 Straightway translated to the upper skies,  
 And added to the number of the stars—  
 Sublime, and sheathing an immortal truth,  
 That saints shall shine hereafter, orb'd in bliss ;  
 And noble, too, the dream that every man  
 Is born below some "bright particular star,"  
 Which rules his spirit, shapes his destiny.  
 Surely no fantasy which ever crossed  
 The heaven of midnight like a golden haze,  
 Making the lovely lovelier, as crown  
 Of halo doth the moon, so fair as this  
 Divinest falsehood called Astrology !  
 Wild dawn of science, morning dream of truth,  
 Beginning like all young philosophies

In Man, the child's intense infantine love !  
He cannot pluck these playthings down to earth,  
He cannot reach them in their lofty spheres,  
Yet cannot cease to love them, and he knows  
That they are kin to that unearthly fire  
Which boils in his own blood, and in his brain ;  
And hence he weaves a mesh of mystic ties  
Which bind him to the heavens, the heavens to him.  
Then were the stars, the "poetry of heaven,"  
Near and familiar ; yet, how awful, too,  
Bending o'er cradles, big with coming fate,  
And shedding smiles or frowns of prophecy.  
Oh ! poor and uninspired even Newton's eye,  
As turning from cold calculation's page,  
He gazed out silently at the cold eve,  
And those dyed angles which he thought the stars,  
To that of Kepler from his Norland watch,  
Who heard the heavy drops of destiny  
Fall like a night-dew from the sov'reign heavens ;  
Or that of Bacon, who in these thick "cusps,"  
These varied aspects, adverse or malign,  
Deemed that there lay some meaning intricate,  
And threw that soul, which of all things the root  
Had pierced with eagle glance up 'mong the stars,  
In a calm, pensive, pond'ring, hopeful gaze ;  
Or that of Thomas Browne, the quaint old sage,  
Who laughed, as he believed, at them and man,

And loudest at himself ; or that of him,  
Lover of Thekla, hero of the north,  
Who turned an eye, soon to be shut in death,  
Upon the " star of his nativity,"  
And sought its counsel, sympathy, and love.

" The beautiful is vanished and returns not ;"  
So sings the poet, as he sees the dreams  
Of old astrologers, like gossamer  
Fading before the sun of science high ;  
But sees not, or, at least, sings not the fact  
That every thought which strongly moves men's minds,  
And makes itself a worship in their hearts,  
Contains within it an unchanging germ,  
May die, but must one day be raised again,  
In form though diverse, yet in soul the same,  
Transfigured, and by this declared divine !  
Thus once the stars in Ptolemy's old chart,  
Revolved, then rested, now revolve again ;  
But now the cycles, centres, too, are changed !  
Thus chemistry for gold its furnace raked,  
With bending form, pale cheek, and firehot eye ;  
But now for an ideal gold it seeks,  
One keen celestial substance piercing all—  
Nor always shall it seek for this in vain.  
And so astrology in truth has merged,  
Like some bright vision in the summer morn,

The truth that all with all is ever linked ;  
That not one atom in the universe  
Swims solitary in the void of space,  
But acts and is reacted on by all ;  
That force and power come on us from above,  
In silent, sightless, everlasting showers ;  
That in the stars and in the earth the same  
Influence, divine or demoniac, moves,  
And that from nearest, largest centres, most  
Magnetic or attractive power is given,  
Men's bodies and men's souls at once to stir.  
This very night I look abroad the sky,  
And feel the astrology of nature real :  
High in the east rides the full yellow moon,  
Ruling the ocean's tides, the madman's brain ;  
While Venus, shining in the clear north-west,  
Sheddeth her own peculiar pensive light,  
And hath her devotees, fit, and not few,  
Who see but her and Love up there in heaven,  
While stronger souls soar with that soaring Plough  
Which near the zenith, proud pre-eminence,  
Holds o'er the gleaming wilderness of Night,  
And eyes which long have sickened of the sun,  
Are fixed and kindled by Arcturus' ray.  
Here leads his gipsy sons, Aldebaran,  
There in those sullen regions of the sky,  
Where, as though "husbandry there were in heaven,"

Only a star or two is seen to shine :  
Yon shivering stars attract some earnest eyes,  
Who worship them because they are alone,  
And in the Milky Way divers descend  
And find,—what find they not in that far sea ?  
Stones, shells, and crowns, and argosies of gold !  
Poor the old vaunted power of Night to this  
Mild mighty charm, which glues us to the stars,  
Swayeth men's brains, toucheth their inmost hearts,  
Fireth their speech, and their religion rules.  
If earth a dungeon be, it hath a roof  
Painted with stars, from which the captive draws  
The light of life, the hope of liberty.  
In John's seraphic vision, in the isle  
Called Patmos, on the first day of the week,  
The Son of man stood nigh in glorious garb,  
And glorious most the stars on his right hand ;  
And so, in figure, Man appears to lift  
Up to God's throne his right hand, robed with stars !  
Stars glimmer on his cradle, meet his eye  
In early boyhood, with their fondling looks,  
Keep aiming at his heart all the long years,  
Lurk in his books, and in his pictures lurk,  
Mirror themselves upon his streams and lakes,  
Glance on him through the woods and through the  
clouds,  
Smile on him from the canopy of dream,

Struggle to see him and be seen by him,  
While dim eclipse is strangling at the sun,  
Or through the bright veil of the summer night,  
Ever in wait o'er him and for him lie,  
And all because 'bove his immortal head  
They follow out a holy heaven-taught charge,  
For full they are of spirits ministering,  
To him who is of God's great kingdom heir!  
And when he dies, perchance, they lift their lamps,  
And light him gladly on his endless way:  
Thus faith and fancy working hand in hand,  
Apart from what stern science has revealed,  
Map out the method of the stars and man.





BOOK THIRD.

NIGHT, A REVEALER.

## ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

**T**HE Sun at Midnight in Norway—Gradual Revelations of the Night—  
The first Star of Evening—Venus—The Moon—Mars—Bootes and the  
Great Bear—Saturn and Jove in conjunction—Sirius—The Pleiades—Orion—  
The Lesser Bear—The Milky Way—The Aurora—Comets—Meteors—The  
November shower of Meteors in 1866—The Sky and Cross of the South.

## BOOK THIRD.

### NIGHT, A REVEALER.

*First—To the Eye.*

YET, ere the teachings we of science stern  
    Essay to render into poetry,  
We now shall sing what the mere eye of man,  
Unaided by the telescope, hath found,  
And findeth ever in the Night's great arch.  
But wonder let us first at this strange truth,  
That to old Night the sun himself belongs !  
That mighty orb which we last eve beheld,  
All red and rayless, in the glowing west,  
The deity or demon of the heat,  
A socketless and fiercely blazing eye,  
A glaring, fevered orb, who, had he sat  
Upon the vertex, not the verge of heav'n,  
Were Hell on high, ruling the day of the damned !

Whether receiving light direct from God,  
Or from his rolling wheels grinding it out ;  
Whether one blaze of ever-welling light,  
The everlasting miracle of heav'n,  
Or whether, bearing 'neath its surface beams,  
As fire its fuel, an enormous mass  
Of sullen matter writhing into flame,  
A Night perpetual in his bosom hid,  
We guess and argue, though we cannot tell.  
But if we fly to yonder planet far,  
Basking within the blaze of Sirius,  
And wait till evening, when the Dog-star sets,  
Northward, upon a sky of molten gold,  
One small shy orb appears ; it is our sun,  
And, as the darkness deepens, he becomes  
One silent gem upon the brow of Night,  
Pensive and pale, among the millions there.  
And if we further pierce the yielding skies,  
Our day-star sets for ever, and with him  
The Milky Way has melted in th' abyss,  
And is forgot by the bold mariner,  
Even as the glitter of the sunlit surge,  
Which meets a bark just starting from our shore,  
Amidst the lustre of Pacific waves  
No more remembered is, nor comes to mind.

And here, my soul, pursue the Midnight Sun,

And fly to watch him from the Romsdal Horn,\*  
 Unclimbed by man ; but Fancy, by one bound  
 Gaining the unfooted summit, steps secure  
 Upon the toppling crag, the slippery verge,  
 Whence snow in terror falls ; which eagles touch  
 Half trembling, half in triumph ; where the light  
 Seems flurried in its passage, and the mist  
 Creeps shudd'ring, with cold and cautious foot,  
 Upon the highest, sharpest pinnacle.  
 Stand there, my soul, and mark the scene beneath :  
 The half of Norway round this peak expands,  
 Eastward a mountain, with a thousand eyes  
 Of crags like needles, piercing spots of snow,  
 Looks, leaning over at that mighty Horn,  
 In unapproachable and powerless hate,  
 So deep the yawning gulf that sunders them,  
 A gulf through which no stream dares murmur peace ;  
 Beyond, a thousand torn and dreary hills  
 Carry the eye across the Dovre Fjeld,†  
 Like stepping stones o'er some dull stream of death ;  
 A glacier here and there, its frozen shield  
 Lifting up blue against the shafts of day,  
 While in the utmost east Sniehätten stands,  
 Soaring nine thousand feet in spotless snow,

\* A very striking hill in Norway, quite precipitous, resembling the Cervin or Madderhorn, and which has never yet been climbed. The author visited its neighbourhood in 1860.

† A great mountain district to the east of the Romsdal valley.

Of Norway's Alps the solitary king.  
Southward a valley, like one waterfall,  
Comes leaping, tumbling, tossing into sight ;  
A hundred woods are there, a hundred streams,  
Some lifting up their spray-sheets from afar,  
Like banners of the Naiads in their wrath ;  
Some breaking into view like prisoners  
Escaped from bondage in the hollow glens,  
Loud laughing in their joy, while others growl,  
Far down, in obscure contest with the rocks.  
And, lo ! two cataracts, from rival cliffs,  
Springing to meet and marry in mid air :  
Marry ! it is the meeting of two wolves ;  
They foam, they tear, they wrestle in their ire,  
Till spent they sink, and, cowering, roll in one  
Their green and glimm'ring waters down the vale  
Beyond. And westward the Witch Peaks are seen,  
The torn and ragged children of the mist,  
Which playeth there with magic lights and shades,  
Heaving up hills far higher than the clouds,  
And making clouds seem solid mountain-tops.  
Here crags are touched with finger-tips of gold,  
And there a sudden glory downward pours  
On darksome depths, where dragons of the pit  
Might hide for ever their unearthly forms :  
Enchanted, solemn, Sinaïtic scene,  
Which dwells upon my mind like a wild dream !

Upon the North, see the green Romsdal stream  
Has found its fiord, while the mountains near  
Stand up in fixed and monumental gaze,  
As pyramids precipitous and bold ;  
And, far beyond old Moldé, billows vast  
Of Alpine summits roll against the sky,  
As if disordered in a mighty march ;  
Here some as blue as the blue skies themselves,  
There others scarred by time or stained with snow ;  
Some sharp as sabres, others blunt as roofs,  
Some labouring in mist, while others stand,  
Gigantic flames, conversing with the sun.  
And ere the mist has wrapped them all in gloom,  
Behold yon mountain in the far north-east ;  
He is alone, as some old prophet who  
Survives his kindred and out-towers his age :  
The sun smiles on his brow, and none besides.  
How beautiful his lonely lustre seems,  
Like eye of happy spirit ling'ring,  
Ere leaving for a better, unknown land ;  
And when it vanishes he too has fled,  
His glory and himself at once are gone,  
Dying as the last saint on earth might die !  
So is it for an hour ; but, lo ! the mist  
Again disperses, and a silence strange  
Comes on my spirit, and proclaims that now  
Midnight has fallen upon the northern hills.

Soundless the landscape, cloudless is the sun,  
The mists are fled, the fiords sleep in light,  
And yet it seems as if an agony  
Were sweltering somewhere in the utmost north,  
An "agony of glory," crisis fierce  
Of burning fever, transit terrible,  
Over some point of torture to the sun !  
See how he droops, and with a strange vague eye  
Beholds the midnight world, while toward him  
All Nature looks with interest intense ;  
Each mountain is a face, gleaming on him ;  
The great Sniehätten glares, a thousand hills  
Lift eyes of earnest question to the north ;  
The very torrents in that sleepless sun  
Seem in their silence gazing eagerly :  
It is as though a god were dying there,  
Or madd'ning in some nameless, hopeless woe,  
With the unrest of all his universe,  
Awake around in silent sympathy ;  
Till, lo ! the limit's past, and the broad ray  
Springs fresh and lively up the morning sky,  
And all the birds their matins loud begin,  
And all the mountains quit their stony stare,  
And dew and beauty sparkle out again.  
And see yon eagle, who with awestruck eye  
Had the whole glaring night watched his great sire  
From eastern eyrie, starts in joy, and wheels



Around the Romsdal Horn his airy flight,  
And calls on Norway to rejoice with him,  
Because that hideous midnight's fled, that noon  
Unnatural, more dread than darkness, gone,  
And morn is sweetly shining on the world.

But sing we now the Night's Apocalypse,  
When Day has set, or is retiring fast,  
And Night's great office is at length begun,  
Night, the revealer, in her order sing !

First one star from the zenith glimmers down—  
Oh, lonely star, how oft I've looked at thee !  
Thy name unknown, thy glory half unseen,  
Now by the sunset, now by moonrise dimmed,  
Yet ever shining there serene and high,  
Like some great thought or image from the soul  
Of sage or poet, looming o'er the world  
Half hid, but seeing and commanding all,  
Or like the steep eye of the mighty God !  
Then Venus steals into the yellow west,  
A bulb of light, trembling in perfect bliss,  
A bride's eye bashful with o'er-brimming love !  
She looks on earth as though the golden age  
Were ling'ring there, or the new world begun,  
Making, in truth, as happy lovers do,  
The peace and joy they cannot find around.

Yet sometimes on a winter eve, amidst  
The cold and livid glory of the west,  
When Frost by his fantastic power creates  
The ghastly mockery of a summer sky,  
I've deemed the eye of Venus full of woe,  
Her splendour chilled, as though she looked for one  
Who walked the earth and met her smiles no more,  
And seem'd—what thrilling contrast in the words!—  
Most beautiful, unhappy of the stars.  
But now prepare, thou purged and silent sky,  
To meet thy prodigy, thy mistress, maid,  
Matron, Diana, huntress of the heavens—  
Ashtaroth, Luna, Hecate, for names  
Many and many glories are her own—  
And from a hundred points she scales the sky.  
First timid, see her in the far south-west,  
Dipping her naked foot in the red sea,  
Which rolls between the zenith and the hills,  
And shrinking as she saw some winged shaft  
From the sun's bow speeding to quench her life,  
Ere she hath planted footstep in the sky.  
When, Crescent, was thy lovely bow first seen?  
What eye first rested on thy modest curve?  
It was the eye of Eve, in Eden young,  
Who saw thee first, shining upon a rose,  
And deem'd thee a new angel sent from God,  
And asked thy name of Adam, stretching out

Her arms the while to clasp thee to her breast,  
In all the fearless love of innocence.  
Her lord, meantime, beholding at one glance  
With rapture the three loveliest of things,  
The new Moon, Eden's Rose, and Woman's Eye,  
United by the band of summer eve,  
And thought it heaven come down on Paradise !  
Then in the south, when nights have passed, behold  
The haughty half-moon lift her yellow horn,  
Haughty, yet gentle as a worshipped maid ;  
Serene and stately in her southern halls,  
She glides through clouds, she gildeth streams, she  
looks  
With high yet modest face toward the west,  
Where the great Sun is setting in his power,  
And knows and loves herself, and envies none.  
Or, farther east, when autumn eves have come,  
See yon full globe of ruddy, rayless light,  
Like a degraded and discrowned sun ;  
Or like the head of Demon, rising up  
Above a gulf where all his kindred writhe ;  
Or like the broad targe of some angel strong,  
Resting on earth as on a battlement ;  
Or like a lost world burning for its sin !  
See how at times some flecks of darkness stain  
The red or yellow glory of the orb,  
Like films upon a furnace, and bring out

In strong relief its rounded magnitude,  
Its solemn splendour, and its depth in heaven,  
Even as the shadows upon noble names  
Enlarge them to our sight, and even as clouds  
Upon thy awful disk, self-hiding God,  
But show more clearly thy transcendent light,  
And make thy love seem warmer, more divine !  
Or see her as I saw last eve in the north,  
Rise in her ruined splendour, with one-half  
Cleft from her, and the other burning brass ;  
Slow and reluctant up the sky she came,  
Which shone all gaily with its August lights,  
Dragging her dreary length, with sullen glare,  
As if she was and felt herself to be  
A stranger and intruder on its joy ;  
And yet no star, in all that lovely eve,  
Thrilled me so much as her sad brassy beam ;  
She seem'd a soul that had been sunk in guilt,  
In death, and in the depths of Tophet old,  
And the stern texts came sternly on my mind—  
“ The light that is in thee, if it be dark,  
How deep and dreadful must that darkness be ! ”  
“ He that hath not, even that he seems to have,  
Shall be reft from him, ne'er to be restored.”  
More beauteous than in all these lustrous shapes,  
Thou, moon, appearest in the winter dawn,  
Now drooping thin, like wedding-ring outworn,

Now leaning down as if on earth to fall.  
How large, how white thy curved crescent gleams,  
Yet powerless as pale taper in the sun !  
So many mighty minds outlive their time,  
Neglected and outshone, yet will not go ;  
Admired, too, by some few and faithful eyes,  
Even as thou shinest, marvel of the Morn !  
Or see the moon of Midnight, to the height  
Of heaven exalted, queenly in her air,  
But in her aspects various ; now to muse  
She seems in pensive thought, and now to dream ;  
Now bashful, to retire into a cloud,  
Now peer behind it with a lover's eye ;  
Now rend the veil, and show herself one smile,  
Now fixed, as though some magic glued her there ;  
Now hasting on in steep and rapid chase,  
Now gay and blithe as a young bridal maid,  
Dancing in ether like a fly in the sun ;  
Now wearied in the greatness of her way,  
Moving as wounded through the endless heaven,  
Now looking as her eye were laughter-filled,  
And now as if it longed and strained for tears  
To shed upon that sinful, sunless world,  
O'er which she holds the mockery of rule ;  
Now lifting horns of light, like those which erst  
Stood upon Moses' bald, imperial brow,  
As full of God he left the sacred hill ;

Now meeting stars with modest conscious pride,  
Or fondling in her arms some darling one ;  
Now yielding to a thunder-cloud, to pour  
A sweet still light upon his shaggy mane,  
And silent smile above his angry roar ;  
Now, while pursuing her mild changeless way,  
Weaving in sport as garlands rainbows dim ;  
Now gladd'ning serpents on Sahara's sands,  
Now rousing leopards on the Lebanon ;  
Now glistening on the eagle's half-shut eye,  
Within his eyrie on the high Cairngorm ;  
Now silvering a thousand ocean-waves,  
Now gilding glaciers into yellow light ;  
Now touching with her white-tipped wand the hills,  
And now from man's view, sudden as a dream,  
Sinking into the eager, yawning west,  
And leaving stars confounded, earth in night,  
And all things wild and wondering behind !  
How strange, O Moon ! that nearest earth, and slave  
Eternal to her motions, yet thou most  
Unearthly art of all the orbs of night :  
Thy light a wild, weird lustre shining there,  
A lovely ghost o'erhanging evermore  
In fear, and love, and grief, and hope the path  
Of our forlorn, yet not abandoned world.  
Unearthly, yes, thy beauty, since in thee  
All things and beings least of earth rejoice ;

The child new dropped from heaven admires thy  
beam ;

To thee the lamb looks from the mountain side,  
With fond delighted eye, and bleats thy praise ;  
The owl's eye brightens as it glares on thee ;  
All wild beasts preying through the night, their lamp,  
Magnet, and mistress, and accomplice high  
Acknowledge in thine all-forgiving ray.

The maniac's eye and brow proclaim thy power ;

The ocean, the mad sister of the earth,  
Now storms, now calms, beneath thy magic sway ;

The poet drinks thy light like nectar rich,

And feels into his soul a joy infused,

Which nought beside thy presence can bestow,

And nought except thine absence take away.

The dreamer dreams of thee, and in thy light

His face shines as a spirit's, bright and pale ;

The lover feels as if celestial love

In thee incarnate walked the evening sky.

Low 'neath thy beam man's voice, but high his  
thought,

Like soft wing winnowing a silent way

Up to the very gateways of the heavens.

The storm looks lovely in thy patient smile ;

Thou soothest the rent crag's perpetual wound ;

Thou sheddest a deep glory on the grave ;

And with the dim eye of the dying man,

Thy lustre blendeth like eternity,  
And thou his beautiful Azraël art!

Next Mars his watch-fire in the listed camp,  
Aloft in evening's sky begins to burn,  
A red, a warning, and a lurid fire!  
How fierce his furnace, and how stern his smile;  
Lording it last year \* o'er Aceldama—  
America one field of fire and blood—  
And down on Aspromonte's fatal hill,  
The bravest, truest of all modern men,  
Sinking supine, his godlike purpose snapped,  
And like some angel flung from heaven to earth  
By a mean despot's blow—a bastard Jove!  
Thee, in thy glorious defeat I hail!  
Great Garibaldi—true Prometheus:  
Caprera's rock the pillow of thy woe;  
Thy body bound, thy soul free as the wind  
Which rolls the billows on thine island shore;  
The "many-voicèd laughter" of the waves  
Subdued to sympathetic harmony  
With thee, thou noble "Prisoner of Hope;"  
And all the honest manly hearts of earth  
Glowing around thy couch a galaxy!  
A new Achilles, wounded in the heel,  
But slain not, nay, like him from his lone tent

\* "Lording it last year," 1862, during which Mars was in the ascendant.



Destined one day to rise in wrath, and hurl—  
Thine eye like Mars, thy voice, like thund'ring Jove's,  
Thy glory like a lance of burning light—  
All that thou wert and art upon the foe,  
Till Italy is free, and thou hast gained  
A name above her Cæsars and Cavours—  
Rienzi, Cato, Brutus, met in thee !

Next lo ! Boötes and the Greater Bear  
Come forth with their deep smiles and lustre rich,  
The one a wand of light, with a vast orb  
Red gleaming at the base, Arcturus proud ;  
The other, many images it starts,  
Yet all unequal to its lofty self :  
Now furrowing the sky, a Plough it seems—  
The sceptre of the earth hung high in air !  
Now a vast Chord, with sevenfold fiery notes,  
Now a Great Bear dripping with stars like snow,  
And now a burning Chariot soaring there,  
As if some new Elijah held the reins,  
And rushed right upward to the Throne of God.  
Lost in the zenith 'mid the summer's blaze,  
With the cool harvest eve the Plough appears.  
How beautiful to me as harbinger  
And starry signal of the Autumn-tide,  
Its mellow air and its unearthly joys,  
In the north-west that constellation seems

An old familiar face returned again,  
Transporting me to early scenes of youth :  
When by the banks of Earn—beloved stream—  
I strayed at eve, sad with a father's loss,  
And saw its stars above the northern hills,  
Like mighty tears, such "tears as angels weep,"  
Trembling in concert with the wailing waves ;  
And thought of death, and love, and power, and fame,  
Of earth, and heaven, and hell—a thousand thoughts,  
Chasing each other through my restless soul,  
While still that constellation from above,  
Poured down its magical and melting ray.  
And so to wanderers from Australian lands,  
Who for long years have missed their well-known stars,  
Or seen them only on the sky's dim verge,  
The re-appearing Plough upon the deep,  
When all the sea and all the ship are dumb,  
Shining with larger lustre than with us,  
Awakens gladness all too deep for words,  
And seems to write in Heaven the name of home.

Not seldom have I seen in contact close  
The sombre Saturn and the lustrous Jove—  
The father and the son—the one a dim,  
Yet never dying orb, sunken and sad,  
Like the porch lamp of Pandemonium,  
Deep-set and changeless in the socket dull,

Telling of old defeat, of hopeless woe,  
 Of dauntless courage, and of scorn subdued ;  
 The other sparkling with triumphant pride,  
 The conscious sun of midnight, kingly star !

See Sirius shivering in southern sky,  
 Once the red Dogstar, prophesying wrath,  
 Now white and weakly bright as maniac's smile, \*  
 Wan, wandering round his lorn asylum cell.  
 Vain to inquire what swift catastrophe  
 Or sullen silent change that star hath turned  
 Pale as the ashes of a martyr's head,  
 Making the melancholy night more drear,  
 And with his strange cold lustre chasing joy.  
 More glorious when he shines in zenith clear  
 Of Australasian lands, crowning their heavens ;  
 Most glorious, when to Herschell's telescope  
 He came at times a rising sun, and flashed  
 Unlooked for and intolerable day,  
 Upon the sage's deep star-moted eye. †

The Pleiades behold in the high east !  
 How softly beautiful their dewy smile,  
 Breaking through yon dim trembling tears, like love.

\* Sirius, once a red, is now a white star.

† When Sirius appeared at times to Sir W. Herschell's telescope, it shone so brightly that he had to turn away his eyes.

Mourn they for ever for their sister's loss ?  
That long extinguished Pleiad ! \* do they seek  
Unwearied for her through the boundless sky ?  
She shining all the while on Angel's brow,  
Or set on Heaven's gate another gem !  
Can grief be in the sky as in the earth,  
And grief as here for glory consummate ?  
Sisters below oft mourn a sister's loss,  
Although they know her loss is gain to Heaven ;  
And thus the Pleiades do mourn their mate,  
With God for ever she, with them no more.  
" One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,"  
Nay, grapples to our breast the universe.  
Stars are the lovelier when they seem to weep,  
And the lone tear shining in Christ's meek eye,  
Is His great seal and talisman of power.

What lofty crest is rising on my sight,  
Upon the glimmering horizon's verge,  
Like hero rushing on some field of blood  
To swallow up its death in victory ?  
It is the armed Orion in his power,  
Late coming into skies all glory white,  
But coming calm, self-centred, unabashed,  
Secure of triumph, and the silent heaven,  
Hushing to deeper stillness as he comes.

\* Merope, the lost Pleiad.

Is he the Lord of Hosts, in battle strong,  
His girdle truth, his sword omnipotence,  
His bow destruction, and his arrow death,  
The hound of vengeance crouching in his leash,  
His head of gold, his feet of fiery flame,  
The glory and the terror of the sky ?  
See as he enters how the Pleiads flee,  
Huddling more close together, like chased birds.  
How the bright Bull's eye in its socket shakes,  
How the Moon trembles in her lowly sphere,  
And how across the deep and drear abyss  
The Great Bear lifts aloft his frowning head,  
And " war in heaven " again seems imminent.  
But no ! for peaceful is their rivalship,  
Each has his field, and each his votaries,  
Long have they looked into each other's face,  
Long felt each other's grandeur, lifted up  
Their voice in chorus to that Greater One  
Who leads them both by their predestined path,  
Even Him from whom the north and south alone  
Their first beginning and first glory had !  
I've seen Orion in the winter dawn,  
What time the morning and the morning star  
Were meeting in the east, and that bright orb  
Preparing to expire, how proudly slow  
The giant left the field, unconquered, for  
Ere the first sun-ray smote the ruddy clouds,

He in the west finished his glorious course,  
And stepped out towering into brighter skies !

Nor let the Lesser Bear remain unsung,  
With the high Pole star gleaming on his verge,  
Greatest, most modest of the starry race,  
Earth stretching far below, eternal stars  
Gleaming around him, in their numbers vast,  
And he so quiet, so dim, so deep in space,  
That two bright orbs like torches still must point  
And show him seated on his steadfast throne.  
Yet there he sits serene, and while in Heaven  
Two starry eyes\* are always fixed on him,  
Sleepless in admiration and in love,  
Two eyes on earth are watching in their turn :  
Thine eye, O lonely mariner, upon  
A thousand decks, upon a hundred seas,  
And thou, magnetic needle ! faithful still,  
Ev'n when thou tremblest, trembling toward him ;  
Like some poor sinful but forgiven soul  
Trembling and turning in his hope to God ;  
Or like the eye of her of Magdala,  
Looking through tears and tremors to her Lord.  
“ Worship of silence grandest is of praise,”  
And that, O polar star, is always thine.  
No sound, but silent trembling evermore,

\* “Starry eyes,” The Pointers.

From all the million magnets of the world,  
Proclaims thy glory, thou mild magnet king !

But, lo ! a soft and far-spread light above  
Tells that the fulness of Night's time has come,  
And that the milky way is in the sky.  
See how it stoops, like a descending God,  
With wings all full of eyes—each eye a star,  
Or like two great light-rays sprinkled with suns,  
Or like two horns, the “hiding of God's power,”\*  
Or like two arms outstretched in silent prayer,  
Or like two streams with bright and rolling waves,  
Divided in their course to meet again ;  
Or like a sand-cloud in the desert-drift,  
Split into twain, and rushing through the sky ;  
Or are they not two of Igdrasil's boughs,  
Disported by the breath that sways the spheres,  
Like branches severed by a mighty wind,  
To clasp again in close and strict embrace ?  
What mind can count the numbers, tell the names,  
Or dream of these thick orbs the destinies,  
So far removed that long ere this the whole  
Perhaps has faded, blackened, died away ?  
And 'tis a hornèd ghost that walks the heavens !  
What flooded glory, palpitating light,  
Shines out at every pore of that deep stream ?

\* Habakkuk.

There is the prodigality of power—  
That is the star mine of the universe.  
We grope for darkness 'mid its dazzling depths,  
We cry for one dull spot as for a gem,  
But find them not—nothing but glory light,  
Surging on glory, lost in richer beams,  
Heavens rising above heavens, as clouds on clouds  
In summer skies, and yet, o'erwhelming thought !  
That milky way is but a single leaf  
In the wide fiery forest of the night,  
Is but one small speck in a canopy,  
Where every speck involves millions of suns !  
Its zone of light encompasseth the sky,  
From Cassiopeïa to the Southern Cross,  
Binding Orion to the Centaur huge,  
Gleaming like fire upon the Altar's head,  
Touching the Arrow's point, the Eagle's wing,  
Bathing the Swan and Serpent in its stream.  
It seems a path of glory for a God,  
In judgment or in mercy coming down,  
To make or mar, to warn, or crush a world !

Complete the cope of starry splendour now,  
Darkness is drowned in light, or peers behind  
Through chinks and loopholes, baffled in its power,  
And starlight rules the heavens supreme and sole.  
How solemn is the stillness of the sky !



Millions of orbs all silent, twinkling all ;  
And yet it seems as if these twinkling ones  
Were trying to speak out, to stutter forth  
Some tongueless tidings—or were one great harp,  
With God's hand passing o'er the trembling strings,  
Ere pouring forth a melody divine.

When lo ! upon the frosty north a gleam  
In mockery of morn begins to shine.

Slowly at first the bright insulter comes,  
Aurora of the north, so pale and pure,  
Tinging the edges of the utmost sky,  
Till, having faced the stern eyes of the Bear,  
Her fit of fearless frolic doth begin.

And see ! she dances on the floor of heaven,  
Bedimming by one step the polar star,  
Dipping her swift foot in the galaxy,  
Touching Arcturus with a scornful toe,  
Meeting her sister of the distant south,  
In zenith high, clasping her in her arms ;  
And then the sky one mazy whirl becomes  
Of many twinkling feet, with murmur low ;  
And the old heavens spite of themselves look gay,  
And lend to these wild sprites a placid smile,  
And sigh when they have trode their measure out,  
And all is sad and silent as before.

Once, in a radiant October night,  
I saw these northern lights, like endless rills,

Streaming aloft from every point of heaven.  
They rose, they met, they mingled on their way,  
Till from the zenith to the horizon's verge  
There hung one great and golden fleece of light.  
It stooped above earth like a wondrous dream,  
In, but not of the sky, an alien there ;  
Trembling it seemed at its own sovereign sway,  
Sovereign, but short-lived, and fantastical,  
Like some vain theory as false as bright,  
Usurping for a time the throne of truth ;  
But soon the ambitious meteor passed away,  
And left not e'en a trace or dreg behind !

Comets ! (bright bastards of the mystic sky,  
Errors divine—abortions heavenly—  
So man is prone in ignorance to say),  
What are ye, whence have come, and whither bound ?  
Ye airy ships of heaven, vapours immense,  
Like phantoms of dead suns walking the sky,  
Magnets in endless motion, needles huge,  
Drawn by the polar forces of the sun,  
And vibrating more strongly as you near.  
Now almost plunging o'er the precipice  
Of light eternal, which overhangs his orb ;  
Now sailing from him to the utmost verge  
Of his attractive power, and yearning there  
For dim and distant fields of outer space

Till gravitation's thrilling whisper comes,  
And says "Stop, go no farther, here return."  
Now cold and pale as mountain mists, and now  
Inflamed to burning glory like the clouds  
Which gird the rising or the setting sun ;  
Now stealing through the night with secret foot,  
Searched for ere seen ev'n by the telescope,  
And now affronting noon and glowing red,  
Like firebrands tossed against the calm blue sky.  
What fables float around these waifs of night !  
Heralds men thought them once of every woe,  
Skiey confederates to earthly ills ;  
And we in youth dreamed that our mother earth  
Should melted be in a wild comet's blaze,  
And thus to us her fierce destroyer spake :—

### THE LAST COMET.

I WAS launched in haste from that fiery shore,  
Where horror and darkness reign ;  
Where the music of madness is heard evermore,  
And where I returned again !  
For an oath had been sworn, and recorded on high,  
In letters of lurid light,  
That I in God's wrath o'er a trembling world,  
Should sweep on my pinions bright.  
"They laugh at the thunder," a deep voice said,  
"The lightning's language is tame ;

But thou on their souls shalt wild panic shed,  
From thy car of crimson flame.<sup>87</sup>  
I stirred with my breath a volcano's fires,  
Which slumbered in stern repose,  
Till roused to wrath from their lava bed,  
In kindling torrents they rose.  
In a bridge of cloud I bestrode the sky,  
And shrieks from the sea came fast,  
For the winds of a thousand storms were there,  
And death was in every blast.  
From his dream of wrath I awoke the plague,  
And the blue fiend laughed for glee,  
And away he sprang to his feast of blood,  
And yet have they turned to me?  
No! the feast is spread, but of praise no more  
Do I list to the melody ;  
Music there swells, but never to me  
Ascends the harmony.  
But thou, my red-winged minister,  
From hell and chaos away,  
To blast and to burn, to force and break  
In ruin thy ruthless way!"  
The deep voice ceased, and away I sprang,  
Like arrow from mighty bow,  
And the vaults of perdition behind me rang,  
With laughter savage and low.  
The starry volcanoes answered me,  
As I rushed with whirlwind's noise ;  
And dearly to me on my lonely way  
Came their old and kindred voice.  
The sphere music said as I sped along,  
"Spare, spare thou that planet dim ;"  
But I listed not to that soft sad song,

For true slave I was to Him.

“There’s fire upon Himmaleh,” India cried ;

“The Pyrenees burn,” said Spain ;

“Mont Blanc is red,” shrieked Switzerland,

“As sun when he leaves the main.”

Like a storm of fire-snow I swept o’er each land,

And it shrivelled up amain ;

And the blackness of darkness followed my steps,

And the whirlwinds bore my train.

I tipped the eye of the eagle keen,

With a wilder, fiercer red ;

The panther I choked in his wilderness,

The bison strong in his bed.

I burned the bull in his pasture green,

The lion old in his lair ;

On the shining crest of the speckled snake,

I cast a deadlier glare.

On the locks of the sage, on the robes of the bride

I fastened my fiery fang ;

And from burning cradles, and crackling cots

There rose a heart-piercing clang.

I melted the snows of the Andes high,

And the condor’s wing on flame ;

Bore him shrieking down from his snowy throne,

And Amazon’s voice grew tame.

I touched each mount, and like Sinai it smoked ;

With my breath I consumed the vales ;

The woods I withered ; the rivers I lapped ;

On the deep I scorched the sails ;

Till earth in mine arms I enfolded it all,

And then my stern task was o’er ;

And again like a fire-ship returning I sought,

And have found my awful shore !

Next sing the meteor, the midnight's blush !  
How shy and transient is its path through heaven !  
Startling and startled, glimm'ring and gone,  
It in an instant blazes, bursts, and breaks.  
Brother, but not in malice, to that imp  
Who haunts the lonely marsh or sullen tarn,  
And, weary of his solitude, comes forth  
To meet the wanderer with friendly smile,  
Like the propitious light of his own hearth ;  
Then laughingly retires and draws him on,  
And nearer comes, and then again resumes  
His giddy flight, till the man sinks in death,  
And the wild wisp fire dances round his corpse.  
But mark the motion of the falling star !  
A shiver comes upon the cope of heaven,  
A glare, a shoot, a fall, and up you look,  
To see if one of the great stellar orbs  
Has wearied on his watch and dropt to earth ;  
But all are safe, and yet you gaze again  
Unwilling to believe it nature's feint,  
Till in the morning's light you see the dreg,  
Unsightly offspring of eccentric fire.

The lonely meteor meets the lonely man—  
Unheeded mid the noisy city's glare—  
Most seen by eye of solitary bard.  
What meteors Wordsworth, Coleridge, Wilson saw !

In search of these they sought the wilderness,  
Daring the darkness and the dews of night ;  
But to the eye of Crabbe\* a meteor came—  
Meteor most gorgeous that ever shone !  
It is a dull and drooping autumn eve,  
Flat stretch the cultured wastes of Suffolk round ;  
A battlement of darkness in the front  
Lowers on the poet and his Sarah dear,  
Returning home beneath the drizzling dusk,  
When suddenly, as if a veil were rent  
By some officious unearthly hand,  
The clouds are torn asunder, and an orb,  
Large as the moon, more lustrous than the sun,  
Asserts dominion o'er the astonished sky,  
And sails majestically through the night,  
Changing at every move its radiant form ;  
Now round, now square, now peaked and edged in fire,  
Now to a disk expands, now to a point  
Intense, and trembling with concentered light ;  
And now in brilliant successive sheaths  
It rolls its volumed glory out to view,  
Raining a storm of meteors as it moves !  
And see how the pale Sarah, in her fear,  
Deeming the last night of the world has come,  
Turns to her lord, who rises from his steed,  
And spreads abroad his arms, and feels his face

\* See his life, by his Son.

Glowing with joy and triumph in that light ;  
The poet-nature leaping in his eye,  
To hail the monarch meteor of the heav'ns !  
Or who forgets that shower of meteors  
Which made last Hallow-eve\* a night of fire ?  
First a few messengers of flame were seen,  
To tell the young moon, setting in the west,  
Of the great torrent which was drawing nigh.  
Then, when the queen of night had sunk, and stars  
In their cold millions filled the midnight clear,  
Like arrows of the gods began to fly  
A thousand meteors, and a thousand more,  
Darting from every corner of the sky ;  
But chief from Leo's mouth, which spurted fire  
Upon the north and west, till every pore  
Of the south-eastern heaven lightened and blazed,  
Sometimes with one great glaring single star,  
Brighter than Jove or Venus, sometimes two  
Leaping in hand-in-hand, then severing,  
And darting into night by different paths ;  
Sometimes in sixes and in tens they came,  
Like falling segment of the Milky Way ;  
Sometimes in shots successive, as from guns,  
They fiercely flashed, but roar or sound was none ;  
Sometimes their lurid tail alone was seen,  
As if the head had hurried out of sight,

\* Hallow-eve, 13th November, 1866.



Or shorn away been by some viewless sword ;  
Sometimes here, there, and everywhere they shone,  
Dazzling, bewildering, and you turned about  
As men do at the cuckoo's veering voice,  
A "hundred ways" to see a hundred gleams.  
Sometimes fantastic forms they sudden took,  
A zigzag glory, like a mighty S,  
Or a corona round, quick cut in two.  
In colours like the rainbow, too, they shone,  
Lavender, blue, and green, yellow and red,  
And always, as these meteors strange poured on,  
You felt God's power, resources infinite,  
Shown in these mere fire-bubbles of His breath.  
You felt how, too, what a prophet man can be  
Of nature's wild and weird phenomena,  
Since every motion of these lawless ones  
Had been foreseen and photographed by him.  
And the sigh left your lips, "Would that the earth,  
Which thus has crossed the pathway of these orbs,  
And seen a sight so rare and ravishing,  
Would meet some rushing shower of moral force  
And inspirations from a higher clime,  
Which should not pass like those erratic flames,  
But with us bide, and bless us all for ever !"

A sadness falls upon the sky ere morn,  
The larger constellations all are set,

(Save the Great Bear, now to the zenith climbed) ;  
Pallid and weary shine the scattered stars,  
Drooping as if about to fall from heaven,  
When, see, a new orb rises in the east,  
Of keen and shiv'ring silver as if made—  
The Star of Morning rising in his haste,  
To gain his glory ere the sun appears.  
How brilliant and how swift his shooting beams,  
Lovely ephemeron of the early sky !  
He pours out wave, and wave, and wave of light,  
Like some hot poet wasting his rich soul,  
Or like some burdened and belated seer,  
Till, struck by the first arrow of the dawn,  
He staggers, pales, then dies with dignity,  
And has for sepulchre the rising sun !  
But let us soar towards the southern skies,  
And view their revelations of the night.  
See Noah's Deluge mapped aloft in air,  
The Ship, the Ark, the Argo there appear ;  
There, too, the Raven spreads his cloudy wing,  
And there the Dove her golden pinion shows ;  
There, as on Ararat, the Altar stands,  
There bows the Victim, and above, behold,  
The Sacrificer lifts his ardent steel !  
There curls the Scorpion, and there glares the Wolf,  
There swims the Fish, and there the Crater yawns ;  
There the fell Hydra drinks the torrid air,

There shakes his spear the Centaur, and there beams  
In jewelled splendour the great Southern Crown,  
And there, O dearest, noblest ! shines the Cross.  
Cross of the South ! how oft since boyhood's days  
I've seen in vision thy bright quiv'ring stars ;  
What mighty realms and oceans watch thy light,  
The vast Pacific slumbers in thy ray ;  
And, as it sleeps, its peace prophetic seems  
Of that new era, when the Crucified  
Shall reign o'er a united holy world.  
The dwellers on the blue Australian hills  
Point to thee as thou risest in the south,  
And every pointed finger is a prayer.  
The mariner upon the lonely deep  
Cries—" It is midnight, for the Cross begins  
To bend, as when the Saviour of the world  
Dropt from it into Joseph's awestruck arms."  
The wanderer through the deep Peruvian woods  
Catches with joy the glimmer of thy stars,  
And sleeps secure, because thou lookest on.  
The Caffre and the negro see in thee  
The pledge of their new-learned and heartfelt faith,  
And smile to thee in secret from their door,  
What time the evening falls upon the waste,  
And its old lion-chorus has begun.  
The Spaniard, eyeing first the southern heavens,  
When he descried thy signal in the sky,

With an exceedingly great joy rejoiced—  
Like those old magi when they saw the star—  
And held aloft his arms, and hailed thy beam,  
Herald to him of hope and empire near.  
The lovers in the warm Antilles\* met,  
By thy bright symbol pledge eternal vows,  
And thou God's witness seemest in the heavens.  
The devotee falls down before thy light,  
The child from Britain come when he is told  
Thy dearest name—sheds tears of ravishment,  
Because he sees the "story sweet of old"  
In vivid letters written on thy brow.  
The poet becomes silent as he looks,  
And drops his lyre to worship ere he sings ;  
And to the enthusiast's heart all Nature seems,  
When thou hast climbed the forehead of the sky,  
Prostrate in homage to the Christian sign.  
The Andes bow their snow-anointed heads ;  
The mighty table lands of Mexico,  
With all their ruined fanes, confess thy power ;  
Shooting within thy lustre, every ship  
Lifts her white sail in larger light and hope ;  
The coral reefs are gladdened by thy smile ;  
The condor's eye turns yearningly to thee  
Upon his lofty and south-looking crag ;  
The fires of Cotopaxi burning bend

\* Warm Antilles. See "Paul and Virginia."

In terror and in love to thy mild flame,  
And own the Cross the conqueror of hell,  
The Lord of earth, the Vicegerent of heav'n !  
And so mankind, enlightened in the truth,  
Deem of that substance, shadowed in the sky,  
The Cross uniting God, and man, and Christ ;  
Pointing at once above, around, below,  
Standing on earth, and towering towards heaven.  
O, 'tis a pillar propping up God's throne ;  
It is a mirror shadowing God's face ;  
It is a finger pointing to God's home ;  
It is a magnet, trembling with God's love,  
And drawing, by a slow resistless power,  
Men of all nations and all kindreds near,  
And charming angels down from heaven high.  
Its shadow is salvation, hope its point,  
Its arms are love, its root eternity.  
See o'er it hovering in a golden haze,  
Mercy and Truth embrace—two shining ones,  
One keen-eyed, clad in linen pure and white,  
The other smiling sweet with rainbows girt ;  
Wrath leans upon a thunderbolt, and looks  
Complacently on Love, who smiles return ;  
Around, a thousand thousand seraphim  
Wave their warm wings and all the air perfume :  
Nearer at hand cherubic forms appear,  
Down bending o'er the cross with lightning eyes,

Into "these things"\* desiring close to look :  
Below, a sea of upturned faces gleam,  
Some smiling, some in bright and happy tears ;  
Some white as snow, as ebony some black,  
But all with love bedewed, and clothed in light—  
The light of that mild ray which crowns the Cross.  
And in the distance a half-empty hell  
Is seen o'er the horizon sinking fast,  
While a great motto flames above the whole,  
"Glory all beings in the Cross of Christ !"  
And in that Cross we glory must and shall,  
Its coronet of shame put on in pride,  
Treasure its tears, and in its streaming blood  
Shall dip our fingers and our garments lave,  
And feel that grief is God, and God is grief,  
And love, and grief, and God, and Christ are one.  
So gloried that lone man who entered Rome,  
The gospel gleaming in his eye and brow,  
"Christ crucified" his only text and theme.  
So gloried many a martyr in the fire,  
Singing to sleep his torment with a strain  
Which rose to Him who died upon the Cross.  
So gloried Luther when the book he op'd,  
And the first verse which flash'd upon the world  
Was "God forbid that I should glory e'er  
Save in the blessèd Cross of Jesus Christ."

\* "These things." See St. Peter.

So gloried Chalmers, when he leaped in haste  
Upon the dead arena of his age,  
And shook it by his thunder-tramp to life.  
So gloried Irving, when he towering bore  
Amid the city's surge a blood-red Cross,  
And held it till he reeling sank in death.  
And so, when other giants shall arise,  
Proclaiming with new force the gospel truth,  
Not in a sordid and sectarian shape,  
But in its height unscaled, and soundless depth,  
As the rich message of a Father's love ;  
As cognate to all nature's sights, and sounds,  
As one with art, science, philosophy,  
And of the universe the ruby crown ;  
As pointing up the path through which the race  
(All save the wilful desperate slaves of hell)  
Shall climb to God and revel in His smile,  
Then shall thy glory, O thou Southern Cross,  
Boast of the burning regions of the earth,  
The star of Atlas, and the Andes huge,  
The shining sceptre of the golden lands,  
The ruler, too, of realms of endless ice,  
Their frozen storms at once who gilds and sways,  
Be but a meteor's faint and empty smile,  
Compared to the great risen light of love,  
Which in the latter days shall bathe the world !





BOOK FOURTH.

NIGHT, A REVEALER.

## ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

THE Telescope Man's Perspective Glass—Kepler—Galileo and his Discoveries—Isaac Newton—The Mars of the Telescope—The smaller Planets—The Lost Star between Mars and Jove—Jupiter—Saturn and his Ring—Herschell, or Uranus—Neptune, and the Heavens as seen from him—Marvellous mode of Neptune's Discovery—Sir William Herschell—The Double Stars and their Rotation round each other—Stars of divers Colours—Swarms of Stars—Motion of the Sun toward Hercules—The River of God rolling through the Heavens—The Black Stars—The Spiral and Oval Nebulæ—The Firmaments—Heavens not infinite, but immeasurably vast—New Stars—The Star of Tycho—Vast Age of Stars—Professor Nichol—Lord Rosse—The Moon and other Planets and Heavens through his Telescope—Resolution of the Nebula in Orion—Ascent of Elijah—The Centre of the Starry Scheme—Concluding Reflections.

## BOOK FOURTH.

### NIGHT, A REVEALER.

*Second—To the Telescope.*

A BOY has sometimes entered unawares  
Into his father's room, and found his glass  
Prospective lying idle on its shelf,  
And hurried out with pleasure as of guilt,  
A smack of stolen waters, secret bread,  
To turn it on his old familiar hills,  
His native woodlands, fields, and rivers blue.  
O! not apocalypse to gifted man  
In his deep trance or vision, half so fair  
Hath seemed as to that boy the sudden sight  
Of the new world which bursts upon his view!  
Columbus of the stile, he gazes round  
And round, and smiles and laughs aloud his joy:  
How tall these trees! how large these apples seem!

What mountain hawthorns ! roses ruddy clouds !  
Sunflowers seem suns, and hedges forests wide ;  
The garden wall ascendeth to the heavens,  
The tiny Earn becomes St. Laurence large,  
And the blue Grampians seem snowless Alps ;  
And yet he feels, although caught up 'mid clouds,  
Embellished and expanded as in dream,  
With joy it is his own dear valley still ;  
And how delightful then to drop the glass,  
And view the lovely disenchanted scene,  
And then again to lift the magic lens,  
And lo, again the fairy shape returns !  
Thus, travelling 'tween the ideal and the real,  
Half of an early autumn day has passed,  
And bliss more perfect ne'er on earth was felt  
By lover, seer, philosopher, or bard.  
So man, the boy, has his prospective glass,  
That toy divine we call the telescope !  
Nor can he tell whether to worship more  
The glorious skies his naked eye reveals,  
Or the same heavens when telescopic power  
Has brought them nearer, shewn them as they are ;  
For if the one more large and lustrous seem,  
The other are his old and favourite friends,  
Far from his eye but nearer to his heart,  
Linked by associations thousand strong ;  
But both the aspects of the starry sky

Strive should the poet to admire and love,  
And with both human and celestial eye  
Should pierce the skies, and make their glory his !

A wingless seraph at the first is man,  
And so he sits and sighs and looks above,  
And cries not with the Psalmist, " O that I  
Had soft and silver feathers like a dove,  
That I might flee away and be at rest,"  
(Though oft, alas, such thought has cross'd his heart,)  
But, " Would I had an eagle's wing, to soar  
Up to those stárry mansions of the heavens—  
An eagle's wing matched with an eagle's eye !"  
For ages the high wish lay unfulfilled,  
Till Galileo lifted up his glass,  
And then a plumèd angel man became.  
No wild Icarian wing the telescope,  
Like fancy melting in the sun of fact,  
But a Dædalean pinion swift and strong,  
And soaring up to heights where fiction faints  
And droppeth down like lead into the sea.  
Pale Thought at Kepler's window long had sat  
Pondering the mighty laws which bind the spheres,  
And paler with her ponderings, though all power  
Was lent her to explore them, till a light  
From Galileo's lens flashed on her face  
And she transported and transfigured shone !

First at the moon began the great assault  
 Of wingèd science and man's armèd eye,  
 And see ! her mottled surface magnifies,  
 And then a map of mountains she becomes,  
 Like earthly hills measured by depth of shade ;  
 Now oceans seem to fill her hollows vast,  
 And from a large and liquid drop of light  
 She, slowly dark'ning, rounds into a world.  
 Next the bold "artist"\* turns his eager tube  
 To yon dim Nebula across the sky,  
 Which, in an instant, is a thousand stars !  
 I see a glow pass o'er his noble brow,  
 I see his eye become a star itself,  
 As, turning to the Milky Way, the truth  
 Comes darting on his soul, and low he says :  
 "Thou, too, shalt one day to this potent rod  
 Divide, like the Red Sea, thy sparkling waves ;  
 Preserve at present thy proud unity !"  
 Next 'tis a night of winter's softest mood,  
 Italian winter as our August mild,  
 The year has newly turned, and Jove's large star  
 Is shining like a sun upon the earth,  
 When cries the artist, "Yes, a sun he is !†  
 I see four planets rolling in his train ;  
 Jove fitly is he called, for there are gods

\* Milton's term for him.

† On the 7th January, 1610, Galileo discovered the satellites of Jupiter.

Burning in kindred brightness round his throne ;  
And there be other suns and satellites  
Within the compass of our system great,  
Which, when the glass says, 'Let light be,' shall shine,  
And, lo, another demiurgical day !"  
Next Saturn's ring he saw, but faintly saw,  
Nor knew its origin and structure strange,  
So "fearfully and wonderfully made."  
But soon the Sun attracts his daring eye,  
And secrets from that sea of fire to pluck  
He tries, and drops therein his plummet deep ;  
But all the secrets he first finds are spots—  
A title to immortal fame it were  
To find even spots upon the godlike sun—  
But to the artist's clear and gifted eye  
Each spot became oracular, and said :  
"The sun is not at rest in heaven's arch,  
But an eyed wheel, such as the prophet saw  
Running below the chariot of God."  
Copernicus,\* like Joshua of old,  
(Not with a spear, but a poor inky rod,)  
Had pointed to the sun, and cried, "Stand still !"  
But now was all reversed the miracle,  
And the old sun at man's command must roll.  
Powerful thy finger, man of might, at once

\* Copernicus had no telescope, only a rough piece of wood, the lines on which were marked by ink.

To move our planet and our day-star too ;  
Thou that ideal point hadst surely reached,  
Which Archimedes strong sighed for in vain,  
The *πουστω* whence to move or make a world.  
As Jove he found a sun, so Mars a moon.  
Mercury, Venus, too, their phases showed  
Each moving round the sun, and each his light  
Receiving and reflecting in its turn.  
Did not thy shade, Copernicus, smile down,  
From some far world, well pleased to hear thy truth  
Proclaimed by all the thunder of the spheres,  
And in star-letters written on the sky ?  
I know not if a figure e'er on earth,  
In purpose and in posture grander stood,  
Than he of Pisa and of Padua,\*  
Alone beside his telescope and stars ;  
That rude and simple instrument became  
His refuge—his religion—and his home.  
Behind him rose the howl of priests and slaves,  
Before him burned the brightness of the stars ;  
Behind him superstition sighed and groaned,  
Before him God's great temple lay unveiled ;  
Behind was Italy in tears and chains,  
Before him the free firmament of heaven ;  
Behind the thunders of the Vatican

\* "Pisa and Padua." Galileo lived at both these places in the course of his life.



Rolled loud and grim, and hungry for his blood,  
Before the eternal silence of the sky ;  
And so he turned him to his telescope,  
And felt its solitude society,  
Its touch a secret spring of boundless joy ;  
Exile untimely from ungrateful earth,  
He sunned him in the light of other worlds !

Yet one I name in greatness like to him,  
Later in date, and larger in his view,  
Severe and silent, quiet as a ghost,  
And wrapt in search of truth, as in a shroud,  
Lo ! Newton comes, seeing with half-shut eye,  
Hearing with still and unerected ear.  
Moving on suns, as upon stepping-stones,  
The barefoot boy crosses the chilly stream,  
Catching no warmth from those enormous orbs ;  
Nay, like stern Mutius in the Roman age,  
Plunging his hand into their fire for laws !  
Clad in essential cold, how near he comes  
Toward the blazing wonders of the sky !  
And melteth not nor shrinks in the fierce light.  
No glory in their glory he beholds,  
No flush of poetry on his pale face,  
Nothing but cold light or a colder law  
He sees, or knows, or dreams of in these stars.  
An apple in his garden falls an earth,

The sun an apple seems on heaven's tree,  
To him the night's a mathematic maze  
Through which with slow, firm foot he feels his way,  
Pursuing gravitation's traces dim.  
Order was heaven's and his great primal law,  
Sublime simplicity his constant garb ;  
And yet, returned from his advent'rous search,  
How high and sole the sage's seat appears !  
Light comes and rests a rainbow o'er his head ;  
Sound surges round him in a sea-like psalm ;  
Ten thousand worlds circle his silent brow ;  
The race of man stand far off in their awe ;  
Cherubs draw near and claim him of their kin ;  
But with abstracted air he heedeth not,  
But ponders deeper questions, larger laws,  
And throws his mighty " lemmas " \* into space,  
Like nets for starry spoils of richer worth,  
And deems himself to be a little child  
(One gleam of fancy on his granite soul !)  
Wandering alone upon the solemn strand,  
Here picking up a pebble, there a shell ;  
While round him unexplored the ocean lies.  
And see, when evening comes upon his hearth,  
That head, the mirror of the wondrous All,  
With its unutterable wealth of soul,  
He bends in prayer before the feet of Christ ;

\* " Lemmas." See the close of the " Principia."

And the mote Calvary, o'er million stars,  
Towers as the sun and centre of the whole.

Since these transferrèd were to th' higher spheres,  
A myriad telescopes have swept the night,  
And in their search the richest treasures found.  
The spots that travel round the burning sun  
Have numbered, named, and sounded been by man ;  
The Alps and Andes of the evening star,  
Exceeding twice the height of Himmaleh,  
Are mapped and measured like our mountains here.  
Tracked, too, she is along her transit strange,  
When from a bright star dwindled to a spot,  
Fly-like she creeps across the sun's broad disk.  
No moon round Venus moves—she shines alone,  
What moon could bear the brightness of her eye ?  
If next you look upon the north to Mars,  
No satellite surrounds his sullen lamp ;  
He, too, is lonely on his station cold,  
His tides are sluggish, moving to the sun,  
Who sheds from far a faint and half-full ray :  
With a grey-greenish light his oceans shine ;  
His continents supply the ruddy glare ;  
Upon his poles appear some shining spots,  
Which, changing in their light, reveal that snow  
In all its chilly glory, ghastly smiles,  
And corpse-like glitter, hath an empire there.

The telescope becomes the moon of Mars,  
And gazes down upon a landscape wild ;  
The bleak and rugged Norway of the night,  
With snow line stretching far besouth the pole,  
Enormous mountains capped with snow and ice ;  
Vast plains scarce lit by the pale light of stars,  
No moonlight here to shine upon the snow  
And wake the heaven which sleeps beneath its chill,  
Or gild to harmony the stormy waves.

In that dark, trackless deep what monsters play !\*  
O'er these wild rocks and frozen seas what bears,  
Living and angry icebergs plunge along !  
The sea how hoary with unnumbered whales  
Spouting toward the dim, diminished sun !  
While beings, haply in a form like man,  
As man was at an early unknown time,  
Shapeless and huge, unclothed or clothed upon  
With shaggy skins or uncouth furs, appear  
Barbarians worthy of the barbarous clime ;  
They seem the composites of slime and snow,  
Of years " all winters," and of moonless skies !

Behold yon dots upon the midnight deep :  
Pallas and Juno, Vesta, and the rest,  
Significant in smallness, whence are they ?  
Are they the fragments of some shivered world

\* See the " Plurality of Worlds," by Whewell.

(So seemed it early to the eye of Kant,\*  
Who sprung upon the thought with eager swoop,  
And waited till slow science laboured up  
Bringing in proof its burden of small stars !)  
Which once 'tween Jove and Mars serenely shone ?  
If so, what dire catastrophe befell ?  
Did wandering comet hurl him from his sphere ?  
Did he from his internal heat explode ?  
Did sin bring down upon him wrath divine ?  
None now can tell, but sure some eye on earth  
Once watched and loved and wept that vanished star,  
If truly " nothing dies but something mourns " .  
On earth, much more it must be so in heaven. .  
Were Venus fading from her pride of place,  
Some heart amid man's million hearts would break,  
Some student pale would miss his morning star.  
Were Jove dissolving, some enthusiast soul,  
Would mourn his deeply-loved and oft-sung world,  
And like an eagle stretching to the sun,  
Would on death's wings the vanished orb pursue !  
Such tears if shed, such blood if e'er out-poured,  
In grief for thee, thou lost and nameless star,  
Time's course has long since and for ever dried,  
And thy sole mourners are those fragments small,  
Poor ruined relics of thy splendid self !

\* Kant predicted the discovery of these planetoids, grounding this on his belief that a world once existed between Mars and Jupiter.

Others\* there are who in these fractions see  
The portions of a great unfinished world ;  
A collapse in creation—a design  
Begun, but ere its middle stopt and lost,  
And trace to this those endless aërolites  
Upon the surface of the globe which drop  
Adoptions of the earth—outcasts of heaven !  
How strange that when in awe the chemist lays  
Those wand'ring masses in his crucible,  
And feels as if stray stones from God's own house  
Were waiting for his bold analysis,  
To find but earth and metal—nothing more ;  
And, looking to the sky and stars, exclaims :  
“ Ye, too, like me and Mother Earth, are dust,  
The earth and heaven, the stars and flowers are one !”

With reverence turn the telescope to Jove !  
It seems to such a “ thing majestic,”  
Almost a violence to look at all  
With a minute and closely searching eye.  
Yet at first glance see how his glory swells !  
His moons, like gems, surround his lordly brow,  
So beautiful and clear, that the dim sun  
Seems but a fifth and far off satellite  
Cross playing his faint sheen with their rich rays !  
His magnitude a thousand earths uprolled,

\* “Others.” See “Plurality of Worlds.”

His speed the moving miracle of night,  
In ten hours moving round his axis vast,  
In ten years circling round his parent sun,  
Prodigious bulk, with arrowy swiftness joined !  
And yet he's but an ocean \* spread on high,  
One great tide flowing round the distant sun,  
With not a spot on which a human foot  
Can like the dove of Noah find repose ;  
Nor ark, nor land, in all that deluged world,  
Nothing but monstrous shapes of living cold  
Dragons and centipedes, and fishes huge,  
Swimming or crawling o'er the slimy surge,  
And lifting languid eyes to the bright sky,  
Where moons are rising, setting evermore !

Long had the orb of Milton's genius hung  
O'er the horizon of our British song,  
Believed in as the pagans do in God,  
Admitted and admired, but little loved,  
Till the "Spectator's" † graceful telescope  
Turned on him full, revealed his wealth of power,  
And showed the lovely vales which lay beneath  
The hoary mountains of his lofty song ;  
And so the glories of great Saturn lay  
Concealed beneath a dark and careworn brow,

\* "Ocean." See "Plurality of Worlds."

† Addison's Papers on "Paradise Lost," in the "Spectator."

Till the clear light of science fell on him,  
And he became the brightest of the worlds,  
Brightest and strangest orb in all the sky !  
His sun, indeed, is but a moon with rays,  
But while his day is night, his night is day.  
Seven satellites, his path, a virgin band,  
Attend in beautiful and mazy dance,  
Seven sisters waiting on their parent old,  
While lo ! as if these were a meagre train,  
There hover above head two glorious rings,  
Triumphal arches bending o'er his path,  
Bridges as broad as bright across his heav'n,  
Eternal rainbows in his showery sky,  
They SEEM fantastic dreams solidified,  
They ARE his swaddling bands of infancy  
Flung off, but floating still above his form !  
Through them his moons, like children, hide and seek,  
Peeping and dancing, leaping, sporting round.  
Above, look in the patches of a sky  
Which is from north to south a milky way,  
Sprinkled besides with large and lonely stars,  
The sun himself between the giant rings  
Looks small, as might some rising star of eve  
Between the Rhodian Colossus' limbs,  
Nay sometimes, for full twenty years his beams  
Are darkened and eclipsed by that strange ring,  
And all the mighty planet is the night's !



And if inhabitants there be, they stand  
As in a mine of glory meteor lit,  
Fretted its roof with fire and veins of gold,  
And bands of alabaster winding round  
Till they forget the sun, and children spring  
Who never saw, nor wished to see his ray ;  
But, wondrous thought ! toward this wealthy sky,  
Planned though it be as if by poet's soul,  
Creating his own heaven for his own heart,  
An eye intelligent has ne'er been raised !  
In the cold seas, under the humid skies,  
Only the lowest of all life can breathe.  
For shell-fish, then, was this great Saturn made,  
With all his moons, and rings, and magic sky ?  
No, these are thine and mine, belong to all  
Whose fancy hath the telescope informed :  
We watch their motions, and their glory drink  
In concert, too, with angels, courier forms,  
Darting from heaven to earth, and pausing here  
To wonder, and to worship, and rejoice  
In a day coming, when those bridged flames  
Shall fold o'er beings worthy of their skies !

Saturn, and Mars, and Jove, and Venus too,  
Are half the telescope's and half the eye's,  
But Herschell is the telescope's own child,  
(Herschell we call him in the tongue of men,

His name is Uranus among the gods !)  
The lone Siberia of the starry waste,  
The planet penult of our system great,  
Girt by six feeble moons and darkened rings,  
Which, like the followers of a ruined chief,  
Mingle their faded light with his sunk eye !  
Yet loyal to the sun is that far orb,  
Though sharing but the semblance of a smile,  
A glowworm-noon from Sol's scant wintry beam,  
He turns toward him an unwearied eye,  
And rolls around him with a speed like light ;  
And all the splendour of his midnight sky,  
Of solid silver seeming, cannot draw  
His heart aloof from his dim *Star of Day*.  
Half-lit, and loved not orphan of the sky,  
He loves and lingers round his shy cold sire.

And now our system's farthest point is reached,  
See Neptune like peninsula arise,  
As his great namesake from the ocean rose,  
He is the north cape of our stellar globe,  
A promontory plunging into night,  
And rising dark amid a sea of stars ;  
Circled by one, and but one satellite,  
Poor, pallid phantom, shivering near his lord !  
Stand on some island in his cloudy surge,  
And see behind, the sun, a brighter Jove,

Struggling in contest with the universe !  
It is the battle field 'tween night and day,  
And when the sun has rushed into his rest,  
Sinking in haste beneath the frigid wave,  
Lo! what a dream of glory seems the sky !  
Like golden apples hang the larger orbs ;  
Farther the thickened constellations shine ;  
For seven, see in the Bear seven thousand stars ;  
Boötes bows beneath his load of suns ;  
Orion, a gemmed giant, glitters rich,  
The crowned Belshazzar of these gorgeous heavens ;  
The Pleiads are a shower of big bright tears ;  
Beyond, twice curdled is the Milky Way ;  
And onward still, through breaks in that starred  
stream,  
Nebulæ of a thousand forms appear,  
Completing with their curling, eddied light  
The large ripe fulness of that midnight sky.

I've seen a shepherd on a lonely hill,  
Look upward to a loftier eminence,  
And wave his hand, a hand trembling with joy,  
In signal to a friend whom I saw not,  
But whom *he* saw upon the distant height.  
I've seen a man gaining a summit high,  
And gazing round and down with breathless look  
On one that panting followed seen by him,

And thus thy presence, Neptune, was surmised,\*  
 A tremble passed through Herschell's mighty frame :  
 Is it the agony of fear or love ?  
 Is he pursued by vengeful comet's wing ?  
 No ! 'tis the yearning of his lonely heart  
 Toward that lonelier hermit in the north,  
 His brother in the bonds of orphanhood !  
 To find that unseen brother, and to bring  
 Him nearer to the sun, the telescope  
 Rushed with an ardent and victorious bound,  
 And to the earth great Neptune was revealed,  
 Child of Le Verrier's soul and Herschell's heart !

Herschell ! that name awakes a lofty note,  
 Due to the planet and its poet too, †  
 Whose names together form a double star :  
 Poet sublime ! his epic is a world !  
 Nor less unwearied than he was inspired  
 With telescope of ice, and soul of fire !  
 Cold swept his piercing organ through the skies,  
 The sharply frosted skies of England's night,  
 And brought intelligence to that keen eye,  
 Which like an Indian's in a moonlit wood,

\* Alluding to the remarkable phenomenon which led Le Verrier and Adams to the suspicion, and ultimately to the certainty, of the existence of Neptune.

† Sir W. Herschell.

A silent ambush lay behind his tube,  
And drank in the deep secrets of the stars.

By music was the young star-gazer fed,  
And in the "stormy music of the drum,"\*  
The fife's shrill treble, and the trumpet's blare,  
He revelled, till a loftier melody  
Rose on his ear, like 'God's o'er angel's voice.  
It was the music of the eternal spheres  
Attending on the solemn march of suns.  
The young Apollo sitting on the shore,  
The chill shell resting on his eager ear,  
Was but a type of Herschell with his flute.  
Touched by his lip, his soul is kissed away,  
Banished by his own music into space.  
Next, with ambition glowing in his eye,  
He drops the flute and lifts the telescope,  
But soon exclaims, "Poor loophole this for me ;  
I'll set myself to build an angel eye,  
A tube worthy of earth, worthy of heav'n !"  
And here the Maker† is again revealed ;  
He leaps to no conclusions, dreams no dreams,  
But calmly grindeth at his glasses clear,  
And all his soul in patience doth possess,  
Till the large question in that broadened lens

\* "Music." Herschell was originally one of the band of the Hanoverian Foot Guards.

† Maker, or Makkar, the original meaning of poet.

Be fully ready and compel reply.  
Tremble ! ye stars, your lord is drawing near ;  
Yet tremble not, he is your lover too :  
That telescope is but the key of love,  
Silently turning all the locks of night.  
See ! inch by inch he passeth o'er the heav'ns  
His smooth and reverent, yet all searching tube,  
Till it is met by a prodigious orb,  
Rolling unseen, unkenned of, in the north,  
And 'tis the earth's and his for evermore !  
To be the heir of some majestic hill,  
Joint heir with God, how many a heart has sighed  
In the fine frenzy of poetic love ;  
But to possess a planet in his might,  
To see, and sound, and weigh, and name a world,  
That is a high ambition, and was gained  
By him we sing, and yet, the humble child !  
He took the god-lent garland off his brow,  
And laid it meekly at his monarch's feet !\*  
His fame was made, his name among the stars  
Had travelled, and in light o'er one was writ.  
And yet no pause or rest the master knows ;  
Night after night his steadfast telescope  
Watches the stars, e'en as the stars watch earth.  
Nor did fair Hero's eye across the deep

\* Herschell called the new planet after George III., the "Georgium Sidus."

More patiently to lone Leander's cot,  
Turn its fond gaze, than his toward those lights  
Which Love divine hath kindled in the sky.  
He saw, but took up as "a little thing"  
Those planetoids, bright bubbles of the sky,  
Although in their own path secure as suns.  
On Saturn, too, he shed a rapid ray,  
Showing him as he is ; and then a tube,\*  
Commensurate in greatness to his thought,  
Like plummet bold, and yet baptized of God,  
He plunged into the dim far deeps of heaven,  
And took the soundings of the starry sea.

To one who gazes on the morning wave,  
After some night of storm hath overblown,  
How strange the aspect of the scattered ships !  
Some solitary ride upon the swell,  
As if the whirlwind dropt them in the surge ;  
Others in fleets and coveys thick combine,  
While here and there in twos† and threes they come,  
Clinging together in their fear and love,  
And circling round and round each other's course.  
Thus to the sage the midnight heaven appeared—  
Here lonely stars in thousands cheerless shone—  
(How like a friendless sun to friendless man !

\* "A tube." Herschell, however, we are told, looked at the stars more frequently through his smaller than his large telescope.

† The Double Stars.

'Tis misery magnified and fix'd in heav'n)—  
There nebulae and fleeted firmaments  
Sailed thick and close together in their pride ;  
And yonder, friends and lovers of the sky  
Appeared in harmony, the double stars ;  
In hundreds sparkled up, these wedded pairs,  
To Herschell's eager and delighted eye,  
Warming the cold and silent wilderness !  
Stupendous all these double orbs appeared,  
But one was larger aye, the other less,  
The less revolving round the larger star,  
As angel woman rolls round godlike man ;  
In colours various as autumn leaves,  
Or as the flowers of summer gardens rich ;  
Here a blue satellite, and yellow sun,  
There a green earth beneath an orange sky ;  
Yonder a bridegroom rose, a lily bride,  
And yonder a small blue and lovely star,  
Revolving round a sun as Sirius white ;  
While here, completing a fine unity,  
Into each other's eyes two blue orbs look.  
Like mountain lake toward the sky of spring,  
And yonder, like two tulips o'er a walk,  
Bending toward each other in the breath  
Of autumn winds, two brown and orange stars  
Reflect their kindred glories evermore.



What sight for angel or inhabitant,  
If dweller there should be, these flowery skies !  
Now eyeing a great sun, green as the grass,  
And now when night should come no night is there,  
But in its stead a red and blazing day.  
And yet methinks one night were worth both days,  
Since two such days must hide the infinite,  
Eclipse the revelations of the dark,  
And force the soul to furl her fiery sail.  
These double days for insects, night for men !  
Around each other double stars revolve,  
In periods which eternity appear,  
To us the short-lived children of the dust.  
While yet the hymnings of the sons of God  
O'er man's creation had not ceased to sound,  
Mizar round Alcor had begun to turn,  
And the long cycle is not yet complete.  
Yea, after earth has vanish'd like a dream,  
Still may their restless march these strong ones keep,  
Unwearied in the greatness of their way ;  
Insatiate with each other's looks of love ;  
And mingling voices in the one deep song,  
They raise incessant to the ear of God.

Yon thickened drop of light Herschell assails,  
And, lo ! it breaks into a swarm of stars,\*

\* Swarms of Stars.

As birds rise to the gun's sharp, sudden sound,  
And shoot across the field in glimm'ring light—  
So to the silent tube in Herschell's hand  
A hundred suns spring up and hover there,  
Revealed distinct upon their endless way,  
In bands of light and love for ever bound.  
And of such swarms of stars thousands are seen  
In flight between the Scorpion and Crown,  
In the soft ether of the southern sky,  
Here globed in glory, yonder sparse and thin,  
While within some a strange and central sun  
Looks forth, a king within his secret shrine—  
Or can such awful orb be called a sun ?  
Say rather sun of suns, and king of kings,  
And lord of lords, star mammoth of the sky !

But now I see the great astronomer  
Start backward from his telescope, the sweat  
Of a deep agony of joyful thought  
Bursting upon his brow in starry drops,  
And his tongue falters out—" Behold, they move,  
And move together ; not the mighty sun  
Alone, but all the planets in his train  
Are stretching to a point in Hercules,  
A point I see not ; but the sun's keen eye  
Discerns it well, and owns a god-like goal.  
Yes, Sol himself is but a satellite,

Is but one wave in God's full flood of stars,  
Sailing the boundless, endless deep of space,  
And sailing to inevitable port."

River of God, that rollest through the heav'ns,  
Where is thy distant and mysterious source ?  
Whither, oh ! whither doth thy current flow,  
And when didst thou begin thy solemn course ?  
Thus stand and ask we by the bankless stream,  
And catch not one faint ripple of reply :  
Nay, there are times when deep defiance seems  
To glitter in these wild and ghost-like eyes,  
To sparkle in these red and soundless waves,  
And that defiance curdles to a cry,  
Heard by the spirit's trembling ear alone :

" Why gazest thou, weak, proud, and guilty man,  
Of earth-sprung ancestry and insect age,  
Upon our mystic and unfathomed fires,  
Upon our rolling and unresting surge ?  
Shut, as in death, thy rash and curious eye,  
And drop thy daring toy, which can no more  
Reveal our secrets, or our nature learn,  
Than a child's coral can the ocean sound,  
Or a bird's pinion cross the sun's fierce air ;  
In God, to God, and about God we move,  
The circling Serpent round th' Eternal's brow !"

But sometimes softer voices shape themselves  
 Upon the humble, earnest, faithful ear,  
 Which listens bending to the sweet far sounds :  
 " To milder climes and nobler destinies  
 We flow, and carry thee, O man ! along.  
 The sediment of sorrow and of sin  
 We leave behind us, in our onward way,  
 Ev'n as earth's flooded rivers clear themselves,  
 By merely rolling on toward the sea ;  
 We move to skies so bright, and warm with God,  
 That happiness shall drop like dew from heaven ;  
 That the dead dust of body-buried man  
 Shall burst its cerements, and be raised again ;  
 That man's face shall become a sculptured smile,  
 And man's blood be the synonym of joy,  
 And nature, angels, God, and man be one,  
 Melted into one sea of perfect peace,  
 Communion constant, and intensest bliss ! "

Shut now thine eye, my Muse, and veil thy voice,  
 And see, through darkness and in sadness sing ;  
 Those black stars,\* viewless wand'ers through the  
     sky,  
 Blind pilgrims pacing aye their dreary path,  
 Suns are they from whose heads the crowns have  
     dropped ?

\* The Dark Stars. See "Humboldt's Cosmos," vol. iii.

Or are they waiting till their glory dawns,  
Till light their dark bonds loose, and set them free ?  
Suffice it that through darkness, as through day  
Their favoured brethren swim, so grope they on.  
Here, solitary, an enormous orb  
Sails like an owl through an extinguish'd heav'n,  
And yonder is a family of gloom,  
A sun with planet-children, and all blind !  
And there, again, close by a shining star,  
Near Procyon or Sirius, a black orb—  
Like evil, or the prince of ill, with God,  
Or his own envious shadow chasing man—  
Unblest, unlightened, dogs him evermore ;  
Half seen, but real as is a frown at eve,  
Darted in anger from some bar-like brow ;  
Their light is darkness, and their rays are death,  
A wilderness of big and restless blots,  
Abortions never yet, ne'er to be born !  
Yet pity such poor nights within the night,  
Pursuing their sad way through these bright worlds,  
As though God's enemies to heaven were sent,  
Their eyes eclipsed, and doomed to wander there,  
Hearing, but mingling not with its high songs,  
Feeling that glory all around is spread  
In dazzling deluge, which they cannot see ;  
And, worst of worst, knowing that they, unseen,  
Cannot by their vile mournful presence damp

One joy, one note, in all that happy throng,  
Till misery becomes madness ; and as erst  
The son of Cræsus, in his agony  
Of yearning love, burst his tongue's ties, and cried  
“ O spare my father !” they their silence break,  
Unbroken since the era of their doom,  
And “ let us forth !” shriek out in hideous cry,  
“ If this be heaven, better a thousand hells !”

But see on high the firmaments of space,  
Those masses rich, star bullion of the sky,  
Of Jacob's ladder they the steps of gold,  
Gold coiled and cast into fantastic forms.\*  
Some curling feathers, or star whirlpools seem,  
Each faintest film a sky as large as ours,  
Eddies of light made by the sovereign Breath,  
Each vagrant particle an orbèd sun,  
While in the midst a solid mass of fire,  
Like the hot heart of some volcano burns.  
Others there are of rounded, mottled form,  
Like clouds dissolving in their elements ;  
Others in long thin streaks of light are spread,  
Like the fine tracery of an evening sky,  
Over against each other, bridged across  
By filaments, star gossamer of night,  
Each filament a shiv'ring string of suns,

\* The spiral Nebulæ.

Each half-seen isthmus an immensity !  
 While others rise as though Mont Blanc on high  
 Were hung, and all the atoms in his mass,  
 And all the specks of snow upon his brow  
 Were every one of them a separate star ;  
 And here and there an oval\* lustre burns,  
 Like that long fabled egg from which the worlds  
 Were said by sages old to burst to day.

“ Hallo, my fancy, whither wilt thou go ? ” †  
 Wearies thy wing not in immensity ?  
 Canst thou by searching, or by wandering,  
 Find out the Almighty, or the very hem  
 Of His illimitable garment touch ?  
 And yet the stars are not the infinite  
 No more than stern Sahara is the earth.  
 Some pilgrim ant crossing its dreary sands,  
 And wearied in his earnest tiny walk,  
 Thinks—his antennæ shiv’ring to the thought—  
 “ This sandy desert is the universe ! ”  
 But give him time, and he will reach its end,  
 And rest his little feet upon the flowers,  
 Which gird the wilderness with velvet verge,  
 Or give him wings, and he would spurn its bounds,  
 And soar to Atlas’ clear and searching air,  
 And see the desert dwindled to a dream.

\* Oval Nebulæ.

† A line from an old poem.

So to man's thought the wilderness of worlds—  
 Like God he numbereth the hosts of heaven,  
 Counts suns for sands, and knows their total tale  
 No more approacheth to infinity,  
 Than the asymptote\* e'er can reach the curve.  
 "Souls are asymptotes of the Deity," †  
 And stars asymptotes of the infinite,  
 For ever seeking, never finding God,  
 Who is before them, as they deem, one step—  
 The step between old darkness and new light,  
 Between void nothing and creation's birth.

The infinite exists not save in God,  
 To us and night the indefinite belongs,  
 And let us plunge away into its sea.  
 From star to star the distance is immense ;  
 Start we by swiftest railway train we reach  
 The moon with ease within three hundred days, ‡  
 The sun himself within four hundred years ;  
 But should a spirit by enormous speed  
 Gain in one day the sun's metropolis,  
 To pass from thence to Sirius demands,  
 Of such swift days five hundred years and more.  
 What loneliness can match a lonely star ?

\* A straight line, which is continually approaching, but never becoming a curve.

† Leibnitz.

‡ See "Colenso on the Pentateuch," Part iv., p. 103.



See yonder Pleiads, how they seem to kiss  
Each other like six rosebuds on their stalk,  
Blown into one by a soft summer breeze ;  
And yet prodigious spaces are betwixt,  
And each fair sister sits a banished queen !  
How awful is the gulph 'tween star and star,  
No vegetation in that barren void.  
No life can live in that cold sullen deep,  
No wing of bird winnows that silent air,  
No thunder walks chanting his ancient hymn,  
Nought there but cold and silence, death and God.  
And when we pass beyond these lower skies,  
And come to floors of ether, where star dust  
Lies thick as sand upon the ocean shore,  
'Twixt every twain of these heaped suns there lies  
A like drear, barren, and deep yawning void.  
"Immensity, what is it?" at the soul  
Asketh the soul, and answer there is none !  
Yes ! God is in these drear and barren realms,  
But is alone as ere He made the worlds,  
But not so to remain, O stars ! for aye  
"My Father worketh hitherto," said Christ ;  
And now may working be in other spheres,  
Creating worlds by His all-powerful word,  
Or patient brooding o'er the dim abyss.  
To quicken idle, empty space to fill  
May be the eternal work and aim of God.

But hitherto the most of space is void,  
And all the stars are but the floating foam  
Upon old nothing's black and boundless sea !

And as from nothing once the stars have come,  
So some to its old womb seem to return.  
I see great Tycho passing forth alone,  
From out the sacred groves of Herritzwadt,\*  
His laboratory left, to breathe the air,  
And meet the convocation of the skies,  
Convened in all the pomp of July eve,  
When lo ! upon the zenith there appears  
In Cassiopeïa's bounds a stranger star,  
As Venus bright, and fresh as dawn of day.  
It seems as if self-kindled new in heaven,  
If not the vision of his maddened brain,  
He calls in haste his helpers from their forge,  
And questions them if they too see the sight.  
" We do !" and even hinds are gazing up.  
It is reality ! and seldom since  
The eastern magi hailed their herald bright,  
Has there been purer, nobler joy than his.  
Each night it brightens as it nearer draws,  
Pierces the veil of noon, and through the clouds  
Of midnight sparkles like a silver cup ;

\* Tycho Brahe, in July, 1572, then resident in the monastery of Herritzwadt, in the Danish Isles.

With scintillations as the lightning keen,  
 Eclipses all the planets of the sky,  
 Then turns through yellow to a fiery red,  
 Becomes another Mars or Bull's Eye stern.  
 Next in May flushes flowerlike into white,  
 And then bedimming slowly disappears,  
 Leaving no place or name behind in heaven !  
 O pilgrim-star, who not two years\* did shine  
 Over this distant corner of the All,  
 Whence camest thou, and what thy errand here ?  
 Some chariot of the gods on vengeance bound ?  
 Or star new formed from out the milky way,  
 Like some vast vapour wrapt in sudden flame ?  
 Or wert thou verily, as some did dream,  
 The star that led the sages to the child ? †  
 If so, be sure thy name is writ above,  
 Although ere Tycho in astonishment  
 Had dared thy bold and kinglike brow to crown  
 With earth-sprung title as with summer wreath,  
 Thou wert already rushing back to God !

From what a height of time the stars look down !  
 Such once I felt when, with a poet friend, ‡  
 (A great prose poet of astronomy,  
 Worthy to rank high among the bards of Night),

\* It was visible precisely seventeen months.

† Cardanus maintained this in his controversy with Tycho.

‡ The late Professor Nichol of Glasgow.

I stood beneath the transit of a star,  
Along his restless and far-reaching tube,  
As with his gentle whispered voice he said,  
His grey eye glimm'ring larger as he spoke,  
His pale cheek paler with access of awe,  
"That star from sixty thousand years looks down !"  
Apocalyptic light there seemed to flash  
Upon me, and I said within my soul,  
"That orb up there existed ere earth was ;  
It is the loophole of eternity ;  
And as Napoleon to his soldiers cried,  
' From yon tall pyramid four thousand years  
Look down on you and on your battle-field,'  
So sixty thousand through that lofty star,  
As from a precipice, look down on us !"  
Most humbling, most exalting thought it was,  
It laid us low, then snatched us up to heaven !  
Peace to that poet friend's departed shade,  
Hallowed the memory of that high hour !

But now we sing, as yet by bard unsung,  
Thy great achievements, gifted Rossian Lord,  
Fourth,\* and not least, among those daring ones  
Who have on night shed telescopic day.  
Thy telescope, true Koh-i-noor it is,  
A mount of light, a priceless diamond !

\* Galileo, Newton, Herschell, Lord Rosse.

Softly it rose, no axe or hammer heard,  
Like that great Jewish temple in the past,  
Mounting in silent stories to the sky,  
Yet in its silent eloquence devout.  
"Song of Degrees," as that in Salem old,  
In deep gradations, solemn parts it sprung.  
The giants when they erst assaulted Jove,  
Piled Pelion upon Ossa, with a noise  
Like their great foe's own thunder ; but this tube,  
Though towering like a mount o'er a mere heap  
'Bove Herschell's greatest telescope, it stormed  
And took in triumph heaven with all its stars,  
Was quiet and awestricken as a child  
Tracing the lines upon his father's face ;  
Yet not the loftiest mountain in the world,  
Not even Mount Everest's\* tremendous top,  
Swathed in its shroud of everlasting snow,  
Older than death or hell, secret as God,  
So near to heaven, so high above the earth,  
So monumental or so potent seems  
As does this mount of vision, piled by man !  
Over the one a sky of blackness spreads,  
With stars like spangles on a gloomy pall,  
Revealing darkness greater than their light ;  
Over the other, in a zenith blue,  
The softest sky of Erin's lovely isle,

\* According to some, the highest of the Himmaleh.

Rivers of flame flow on, stupendous suns,  
 Like dreams of genius or of madness, walk,  
 And seem, and are real as the tube itself.  
 Upon the one is solitude intense,  
 Nought there but Fancy shiv'ring in the snow ;  
 Behind the other, Intellect and Faith  
 Mingle their wond'ring glances as they gaze.  
 And such a revelation meets their eyes !  
 The moon expands into a province large ;  
 Here mountains tossed on mountains stun the view,  
 As though the Titans, frightened from their sport,  
 Had fled and left their playthings as they were.  
 And there great hollows, oceans called of yore,  
 Lie deep within the circuit of the hills :  
 Some grey, some green, some red, some black, some blue ;  
 Some plains, some pits of boundless depths appear ;  
 Some set with cones and craters ; some begirt  
 By rings of mountains closing closely round,  
 Or, like shy sentinels, retiring back.  
 See one, the Sea of Silence\* it is named,  
 Where never broke a storm or stirred a wave ;  
 See, farther on, beneath the Polar star,  
 Expands an ocean of eternal ice, †  
 Where the dead wave has never felt a glow,  
 Nor ever heard one whisper of the spring.

\* Mare Serenitatis.

† Mare Frigoris. These are still thought by some to be oceans, but this is not the general opinion.

And yon profound and yawning grave\* is named  
 Plato, as though that noble spirit there  
 Had found at last his visionary "cave ;"  
 And there,† again, Endymion in the moon  
 Sleeps, as the moon is fabled to have slept  
 In his embrace of rapt and mystic love ;  
 Here, in the centre of a spacious plain,  
 Surrounded by a wall of mountain tops,  
 Rising unbroken more than Alpine height,  
 Stands a prodigious hill, itself alone,  
 Cleft by a crater to its heart of fire ;  
 And yonder shine, in ever-welling light,  
 Like islands rising from the Sea of Glass,  
 And catching endless day from God's own eye,  
 Mountains to which Mont Blanc is but a dwarf,  
 Their glory never shaded, never set !  
 See what a mass of scorixæ, cinders scorched,  
 Of dreary desolation's gloomy caves,  
 (Where your soul stops and shudders on the brink,  
 And cries, " God only there can dare to look !")  
 Of splintered crags, of peaks sharp as death's scythe,  
 Of barren plains and spent volcanoes deep,  
 The telescope reveals the moon to be ! ‡  
 O, beautiful deceiver in the sky,  
 O, wand'rer, pale and holy, of the night,

\* A dark hollow.

† Another dark hollow in the moon.

‡ See Humboldt, vol. iv. p. 493.

Thou seemest to the disenchanted eye  
As did that stripling cherub on the Mount  
Niphates called, when the sun's angel saw  
Foul passions change his face, and horrid scars  
Through thin and borrowed veil glaring intense.  
No life in all thy surface, not one flower  
Blossoms through all thy borders, water none  
To mirror or thy mountains or thy sun—  
A world of utter death thou rollest there,  
A corpse in fairest winding sheet disguised ;  
And yet imagination loves thee still,  
Both as thou art and as thou seem'st to be,  
Thy veiled and naked self alike admires !

But other triumphs still before thee lie,  
Thou "Specular Mount" above the starry deep ;  
Venus must swell into a hornèd moon ;  
Mercury, lost beneath the veil of day,  
Becomes on the sun's brow a sparkling gem,  
Bashfully trembling, like a youthful bard  
When new exalted to the height of fame ;  
The star of Jove appears a mighty lamp,  
Enclosed and burning in the telescope ;  
And Saturn, 'tis an angel painter's dream,  
A picture rather than a work of God,  
His rings, they are the wheels Ezekiel saw,  
"So high that they were dreadful," and his sky



Becomes the "terrible crystal"\* of the seer,  
 His moons the eyes which sparkled in that dream,  
 And the whole is the Chebar's Living One, †  
 Transcribed upon the night by hand divine.

But chief the nebulæ, thy magic power,  
 Changing their forms as in a vision, own ;  
 Upon night's canvass, like dissolving views,  
 Shifting their shapes as sands in desert winds,  
 And shapes such as no language can express !  
 Now wings like those of angels floating high,  
 Now rounded globes of globes, and stars of stars,  
 Now crowns of glitt'ring diamonds, wreaths of gold,  
 Now clasps and cusps, and tubes and pyramids,  
 And waving scarfs, and falling cataracts,  
 And all of light, and every speck a sun,  
 Millions of nebulæ and milky ways  
 Crowding and clust'ring near, like seas on seas !  
 And how the spirit springs, like bow unbent,  
 To think "this wealth of God is also mine,  
 Mine by the right of conquest and of sight,  
 God's 'many crowns' these worlds, now bind my brow,  
 Because I came, I saw, I conquered all !"

In old Orion's sword there is a spot ‡

\* See Ezekiel i.

† See Ezekiel.

‡ The Great Nebula in the sword of Orion.

Seen, but seen barely, by the naked eye ;  
Thousands of eyes, armed and unarmed, had looked  
And looked, and stared for ages on that spot,  
And sought to melt its mystery into stars ;  
But there, like some deep problem in the heavens,  
It hung unsolved, and, smiling far disdain,  
It seemed to say, "When will you conquer me ?  
Worm ! pry not with thy weak proboscis here."  
Meanwhile, a thousand kindred nebulæ,  
Like mirrors broke, had shivered into suns,  
Before the telescope's resistless touch ;  
And still that spot, shining itself alone,  
With close yet careless hand its secret kept,  
Till on a night of Ireland's balmy spring,\*  
The March wind hush'd, and not a whisper heard  
Through all the solemn concave of the heavens,  
Lifts its great eye the Rossian telescope,  
With a commanding, yet beseeching look—  
Look half of prophecy and half of prayer,  
Towards that lofty and disdainful spot,  
And lo, it trembles, yields, dissolves, becomes,  
Despite itself, a mass of sparkling stars !  
And at that moment, too, a thought sublime,†  
Slow and reluctant, into night retires,  
Destined, it may be, one day to return.

\* March, 1846.

† La Place's "Nebular Hypothesis."

Ah ! far too old these heavens for us to see  
Their first beginning and ancestral germs ;  
The scaffolding of God has long been down,  
And the all-mighty Architect away,  
Building, as we believe, in far off spheres,  
But here, conserving all, creating none.  
Who can compute, conceive the age of stars ?  
How long since angels o'er their corner stones  
Shouted for joy, and sang in chorus loud,  
No tongue can tell, how old, yet young they seem !  
How strong the kiss God's lip His child-sun gave,  
Ere wandering He sent him through the sky,  
Since yonder, on his face, 'tis burning still ;  
And he as full of fresh and bounding life  
As the first moment when he woke and saw  
His elder brethren round him shining calm,  
And smiling silent welcome at his birth !

Now let us mount Elijah's car of flame  
And see the universe as he it saw—  
Between him and Elisha bursts the blaze,  
He leaps into his seat—his mantle falls,  
He takes the reins with hands that burn as bright,  
And if they tremble 'tis with conscious power,  
Like king who grasps his sceptre—chief his sword !  
The wilderness is left, the Jordan shrinks  
Into a rill—its foam seen—voice unheard,

Elisha's face, lightened with glory, looks  
One moment upwards, dwindles, and is gone.  
Southward o'er Sinai sweeps the meteor strange,  
Gilding its heights—as with some relict fire  
Of that great morning when God's feet, like brass,  
Shone through the thunder darkness—pillars stern,  
Like those which prop the steadfast cope of hell !  
The moon appears above the waste—is neared—  
Broadens into a strange and haggard world,  
Like wrinkled brow of the most aged damned,  
While low beneath it shines a mottled earth ;  
Till both are past, and the great sun draws near  
Like God's own fiery chariot in the sky.  
And he who erst on Carmel stood alone,  
Had once old Horeb for his pedestal,  
For momentary footstool has the sun !  
Nay, spurning it, resumes his rapid way.  
Stars flit and fall as he pursues his path ;  
Rushing to meet him, see vast streams of suns  
Come so—so vanish—like sheet-lightning glares  
Flashing through night around the traveller ;  
Then a wide ocean of essential light,  
Then a great darkness, horrid and forlorn,  
Appears, through which his chariot and his eye  
Plough on, like kindred fires, their fearless path ;  
Till now, like mountains in the morning beam,  
Appear the gateways of God's city high ;

Millions of angels, sailing round like clouds,  
And 'mid them mingling, this celestial car  
Carries Elijah up and in—when lo !  
From the deep shrine of the Unspeakable,  
The very heart of heaven, comes a smile,  
And with the smile a voice, and these the words  
Which drop in music on the prophet's ear :  
“ Welcome, thou faithful servant of thy God,  
Here are thy kindred—here thy heritage,  
Here, eagle of the earth, on glory prey,  
And share the joy for ever of thy Lord.”

Where is the centre of the starry whole ?  
Some dreaming say it is the throne of God ;  
As if the dunghill heaps, the marshes low,  
The pits obscene, the holes of asps, and dens  
Of wild beasts rank with litter and with blood,  
The wet stone of the scorpion, and the web  
Where sits the loathsome spider on his watch,  
And all the dark, unclean, detested haunts  
Of doleful creatures, every form and shape,  
Revolv'd around that viewless blissful throne !  
Search for the centre 'mid these dewy tears,  
Which meeting, melting form the Pleiades,\*  
There lies the point to which the bending stars

\* In the Pleiades is supposed to reside that balance of stars, or centre of stellar gravity, which we have here (poetically) identified with the centre of the universe.

Turn in their millions through the vault of heaven ;  
There burns the parent spark of all that blaze,  
There God first said " Let light be," and light was ;  
And with a filial fondness all these worlds  
Around their native cradle roll for aye.  
O'erwhelming thought ! that up amidst that clump  
Lies the first Eden to the mighty All ;  
There light and life and order first began,  
And thence, like fire storm-driven across a wood,  
The glory of the Lord pervaded space ;  
And now each wave, each drop, each sun, each spark,  
Still burns and bows and bends before that point  
Paternal ; as in dream the evening sheaves  
Of Joseph's brethren homage did to his ;  
Or as, were found the manger of the Christ,  
Where the Almighty in an infant dwelt,  
One sea of universal pilgrimage  
Would flow around and kiss its homely lips.  
Small may this cradle of creation be,  
Some silent, sombre, and unpeopled star,\*  
Unconscious of the universe of suns,  
For ever doing homage to its age,  
As a dead brow is of its laurels green,  
Highest and humblest of the orbs of night,  
Like some great man—who knows not he is great ;  
Or like some saint who knows not he is good ;

\* Perhaps Alcyone.

Or like that infant God of Bethlehem ;  
Regarding with a smile of ignorance,  
Beautiful as the dumb celestial light,  
The wonder-stricken gaze of shepherds pale,  
The kneeling homage and the presents rich  
Of Magi God-led by that new-made star,  
And his own mother's clasping arms combined  
In agony of worship, pain, and love !

Come back to memory the many hours,  
Now dark, now glad, we've spent among the stars ;  
For now a poison, now a honey dew,  
Droppeth at diverse hours from these strange skies ;  
Now they're the greatest, "saddest"\* of all sights,  
And now they minister unearthly joy ;  
Now, riding through the eve, we've leant and hung,  
With wonder, rising, kindling into love  
Toward those oceans of unmeasured flame,  
Coming out slowly in the silent south.  
Sometimes beside a placid pool we've stood  
And seen the congregation of the stars,  
Like saints arriving in appointed times,  
To join the great assembly of the skies,  
Collecting one by one beneath the waves—  
Standing we seemed on heaven's pinnacle—

\* "Saddest." Alluding to Carlyle's famous saying about the midnight heaven, "Ah ! it's a sad sight!"

And all its glories gathering round our feet !  
Sometimes along a broad and level plain  
We've walked in terror, lest the stooping stars  
Should crush us into fragments, so they hung,  
Num'rous and near, and large, and golden-hued,  
Like the ripe fruit of an autumnal tree.  
Sometimes at midnight, when the wind was hushed—  
A west'ring moon—long stripes of fleecy cloud,  
Bridging the sky, and sown with single stars,  
The immeasurable blue above has seemed  
So awful, yet attractive in its light,  
That we have shivered, turned, and feared to fall  
*Upward*—then bent our head in silent awe,  
And with our hands have clove and clung to earth.  
Sometimes beneath a winter canopy,  
Burnished and whitened by the touch of frost,  
The stars appeared a storm of frozen snow  
On earth descending—never to descend.  
Anon the larger constellations shone,  
Like rams of light leading their starry flocks  
Which in their millions meekly followed them.  
Sometimes we've risen from a couch of woe,  
Haunted by spectral mem'ries of the dead,  
Or by those doubts which darken o'er the soul  
When midnight brings its mystery and gloom,  
And seen a single star look in at us—  
Its name unknown—its mission well we knew ;



For there seemed solemn purpose in that gaze ;  
An eye it looked from out the Infinite,  
Perhaps of friend or lover long since dead,  
So meaning, so consoling, was its beam,  
So mild its aspect, and so sweet its smile ;  
And, as spring sunbeam meets a lurid torch,  
It met our anxious soul, and whispered calm.  
And then, returning to our couch, we sank  
In slumber, and our dreams became divine ;  
Till morning rose, and we remembered nought  
But rainbow fragments of these visions bright :  
We had been up among the skies we thought,  
And seen the glories of the upper heavens,  
Thick as the golden sands on summer shores—  
Like furrows in a field, we firmaments  
Had crossed—o'er suns had stept as over cones,  
Brown-gleaming 'mid the gloom of forests old—  
Had swum across whole seas of silver foam,  
Each foam-bell a great system like our own,  
Had stood on skiey Cervins\*—piercing points—  
Looking and lording it o'er wildernesses,  
Each wilderness a wilderness of worlds !  
And cried, “ Part of His ways these only are,  
The half has not been told, the whole cannot ;  
These are the whispers of Omnipotence,  
The thunder of His power what soul can bear ?

\* “ Cervin.” The famous Maderhorn in the Alps.

And, looking upward through the concave dark,  
Had seen, as stooping ere they downward dropt,  
New heavens yet destined to surpass the old  
In number, glory, lasting loveliness,  
And take their room when they are dark and dead ;  
And, at the very moment when we thought  
They drew anear in solemn pomp and power,  
We woke and found it but a vision pale,  
Yet one which on our pillow had shed peace !

Yet sadder sight at times there's none than stars,  
Their multitudes perplex, periods confound !  
Fire may they be, but cold their far-off sheen ;  
Their silence is the silence of the dead ;  
Between us there is fixed for aye a gulf,  
Like Richter's\* old man we must ever 'plain :  
" We cannot nearer to these bright ones draw,"  
No more than we can know what music means,  
Pouring on men its " beautiful disdain."  
The smile of little child, or lovely maid,  
Touches with gladness every human heart ;  
A summer stream has melody for all ;  
But Venus, shining in her richest light,  
Is only by a few selected ones  
Admired ; to all besides she's cold and strange ;

\* "Richter's." Alluding to Jean Paul Richter's vision of the old man with the three great wounds in his heart.

And, could men hear the music of the spheres,  
Not more melodious were it than the sound  
Of palace gates shut roughly in their face !  
Numberless beyond number are heaven's stars ;  
Numberless beyond number are earth's graves ;  
And naught but mocking, melancholy light  
Falleth from these high heav'ns on these low heaps,  
Where dust with dust, and ashes ashes meet,  
A churchyard 'neath the stars—most pensive sight !  
Death's trophies and heaven's glories seen at once,  
Here dull and grassy graves, there sparkling eyes,  
Which brighten, but not break the silence stern ;  
Here mind seems buried in these cold, dark tombs,  
There matter triumphs in yon haughty sky,  
“Living, ye starry strangers, ne'er to die !  
But where the dear, the mourned, the gifted dead,  
Who loved you, knew you, often sang your praise,  
And now in these damp cells are mouldering ;  
Greater than you they were, here low they lie,  
And over them your splendour spills in vain !”  
Thus weeping, wondering, we ask, and shake  
Our very soul with asking, but reply  
None comes ; these stamm'ers never shall speak plain.  
The light of life and immortality  
Beams from another and a brighter star !

And yet the heavens, O God ! confess Thy power,

Tell of Thy glory with unceasing voice,  
Whether they seem, like frightened hosts, to flee  
From some great enemy who follows fast,  
Or whether seeking one who flies before,  
As those who search through earth for parents lost ;  
Whether Jehovah's blazing feet they seem,  
Or whether of His robe the spangles bright,  
Yet always do they point to the great One ;  
In whose strong spirit all do burn and move,  
And from whose presence none can e'er escape.  
Preachers of terror now, and now of love,  
But everlasting preachers are the stars ;  
For ever speaking, and for ever dumb.  
Harmonious in their monotone divine,  
Their fane immensity, their pulpit night,  
Their one theme the one God who filleth all ;  
And those who listen to their still small voice,  
Reply return with faint but piercing " Yes !  
Your word is true, GOD IS, and none but HE !"

BOOK FIFTH.

NIGHT, A JOY.

## ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

THE Beauty of Dark Objects—Fire and Gas-light at Evening—The Hush of Eve—The Joys of Night—Contemplation—Evening Visit to Lincluden Abbey—Evening Sermon at the Scottish Tent—The Joys of Love—Music at Night—The Bed-Dreams, and their Powers and Pleasures—Bunyan dreaming his Pilgrim's Progress—The Joys of Devotion.

## BOOK FIFTH.

### NIGHT, A JOY.

**B**RIGHT things are beautiful, the dark are more—  
The shady hair above some smooth white brow  
Is fairer than the brow which smiles beneath ;  
The jet black ornament upon the neck  
Of fair loved child, brighter than diamond shines ;  
The raven's wing is lustrous as the dove's ;  
The pine eclipses the most stately palm ;  
Imagination loves the sunless side  
Of mountain, better than its southern sweep ;  
The thunder-cloud is grander than the dawn,  
And the great darkness, into which at times  
God doth retire, *that* is the heaven of heavens !  
Many the names which to our God belong,  
His greatest, PELI,\* or the Secret One,  
That night-like name, most worthy of Himself.

\* "Peli." See Judges xiii. 18.

Thus Night the beautiful is Night the Joy,  
And like her beauty is the joy she gives,  
Unearthly in its power, obscure and deep.  
What is the sweetest light which shines on earth ?  
Sweeter than morning dew-drops, evening stars,  
The ocean's silver foam or sunlit streams ;  
It is October's fire upon the hearth,  
After a summer's absence, back returned,  
Like friend from far, how clear and purged its flame !  
How heav'nly and how homely is its eye,  
Familiar spirit of the lonely room !  
How oft in haste have we shut out the stars,  
The red and lofty clouds of autumn eve,  
The autumn landscape glimm'ring into grey,  
That we might commune with this household sprite,  
As though we were a Parsee of the prime !  
Thou best companion to a thoughtful man  
(Save some dear female form or lovely child)—  
Fire ! with thy lively, bright, and bick'ring blaze,  
Cheering his gloom, or adding to his joy ;  
Musical fire ! singing a tune divine,  
Which sounds like whisper from the land unseen,  
And melts into our thoughts like sparks in sea.  
Magical fire ! creating thy new worlds,  
Mountains of darkness, ridges of red rock,  
Flashes of lightning, moonlike craters dim,  
Curls, jets, and streams, and cataracts of flame,



With a deep core of glory in the midst !  
Most modest fire ! companion though thou art,  
Thou never dost obtrude thy presence pure.  
Yet does not sometimes a low moaning sound  
Appear to murmur chiding if we, lost  
In thought, forget thee, genius of the hearth,  
And say—"Remember, I, thy friend, am near?"  
Beautiful fire ! yet terrible withal,  
A goddess stooping from her pride of place,  
To watch, and love, and to bestow on us  
Her wildly brilliant and wreathed smiles ;  
Yet come not nigh ; she is a goddess still—  
Touch not the burning hand of Eblis' child,  
None can approach to her too near and live !  
Above our lonely fire, a lamp as lone  
Burneth in beauty o'er our black'ning page ;  
It, too, is loved, and lovely in its place,  
Raining light down, not darting glory up :  
It seems at times a prying angel bright,  
Stooping to see what human worms inscribe,  
And smiling with a quiet, half-scornful eye !  
Yet what a willing slave our gas-lamp is !  
We turn, and turn, and turn it ; at our touch  
We make it wax and wane, as doth a moon ;  
Now widen it to bright and maddened blaze,  
Then in a moment plunge it into night.  
And it, too, like the fire, a music hath,

A shiv'ring song—we hear it now—how sweet !  
It seems the ripple of a summer stream,  
Heard in the days of boyhood, long ago !

“ Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter ;”\* how unheard the hush of eve !  
Yet real its music as the soul itself.

It is a finer, a more spiritual air,  
A heav'nly atmosphere, where every sound  
Is mellowed, and like lovers' tones becomes,  
And silence a felt perfume in the sky !  
The streams sink into depths of melody ;  
The warble of the birds is sadly sweet,  
As if of day the requiem they sung ;  
The harsh note of the corn-craik, clover hid,  
Is softened in the spirit of the eve,  
Concerting finely with the rook's thick caw ;  
The village hum is deepened to delight ;  
The clang of hammer from the smithy forge  
Falls like soft thunder on the distant glen ;  
And, as the downy climax of these sounds,  
The beetle drones his dull monotony,  
And lonely bat just stirs the silent air,  
With his smooth, sad, and ever-circling wing.

But higher joys than all of these hath eve,

\* Keats.

The joys of meditation let me sing.  
Take with thee for companion one lone stream,  
And to the music of its half-seen waves,  
Now chiming all their stony channel o'er,  
Like tinkle of a thousand sheep-bells keen ;  
Now 'midst their narrow bank, in deep slow note,  
Conversing with their own and inmost soul ;  
Now sad sounds murmuring beneath the gloom,  
Now when a lively light breaks forth, like larks  
Bursting out joyous into sudden song ;  
To this thy heart attune, thy fancy pitch,  
Then soar away into the sphere of thought—  
And if thy soul get weary in her flight,  
And her wing flag, rest it upon a star,  
For many stars are lifting their bright orbs  
Above the woodlands and the mountains blue.  
What thoughts arise amid a summer eve !  
Peering at first like eagles o'er their nest,  
Till, as the darkness deepens, they fly up—  
First a vague happiness, like odour rich,  
Steals like the smell of bean or clover field,  
Dissolving all the sense in luxury ;  
Then, spurning this soft joy, the ardent soul  
Springs upwards, like a Samson from his sleep,  
And grapples with the questions of all time ;  
Yet, in the spirit of a loving hope,  
Which shows the locks of earth in light of heav'n !

God IS ! we feel Him in the balmy breeze,  
Hear Him in that calm wave's soliloquy,  
See Him in the soft sparkling of those stars,  
Find Him in our own beating hearts inclosed.  
Heaven IS ! 'tis here, within, around, above ;  
And whither from its presence can we flee ?  
In those larks' nests it lurks, it bathes those stars,  
Blooms in those lovely dim seen clover bells,  
And sighs its ecstasy in that low wind,  
Musing and dreaming 'mong the grass and flowers.  
Nature, our mother, is the child of God,  
And we to her deep bosom have been caught  
In twilight's trance, and she hath kissed our lips,  
And left thine imprint, Immortality !  
Such is love's logic, eve's mild argument,  
And heart and fancy both attest it true.

Again, our evening's meditation turns  
Not upon God, but on God-gifted man :  
Thus to Lincluden's Abbey once we walked,  
In the mild twilight of a burning day,  
With one, a poet of the truest grain,  
Who erst on Acksbeck's Mount\* stood by the Fiend,  
And probed the sultry secrets of his heart.  
Autumn had barely touch'd the summer's brow  
With one cool finger of her matron hand ;

\* See Aird's "Devil's Dream on Mount Acksbeck."

The sky was clear and burnished in its depth,  
While here and there an early star peeped through,  
Perplexed and bashful in her solitude.  
All in the vale was silent, save the Nith,  
Singing, we thought, some "owreturn"\* from her bard,  
Her long since dead but unforgotten Burns ;  
Her voice now "crooning," in a lowly tone,  
The old lament upon "Drummo'ssie Moor," †  
Now blithely breaking into "Auld Lang Syne ;"  
Now, as it met some bold and battling rock,  
Rasping out "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled ;"  
And now, as the lone Abbey drew anear,  
Moaning some unintelligible dirge,  
Like the "Bard's Elegy" by river sung ;  
And then, the river left, the ruin rose,  
The same as when the form of Liberty  
Appeared, and dauntless met his kindling eye ;  
The while the fox was howling on the hill,  
And the dim distant echo gave reply.  
We entered with hushed hearts the ruined fane—  
When, lo ! as if with sudden hand, a torch  
Some spirit of the night had lifted up,  
To show us all the secrets of the pile,  
The full large yellow moon of harvest rose,  
And filled the oriel window with her form,

\* "Owreturn." Scotch for Chorus.

† See Burns' "Lass of Inverness."

And poured a soft and softening smile around.  
Often we thought the poet's troubled soul  
Has held a tryste here with that lovely moon,  
And oft his sad eye has been soothed by her's ;  
Till, as he turned his ling'ring footsteps home,  
Came rushing back the joys of early youth,  
And he his poverty and woe forgot,  
And was again the happy boy of Doon,  
In's hand the sickle, on his lips the song,  
And in his heart the first pure gush of love.

The joys of converse next our theme become ;  
Of converse, song, and music, threefold chord,  
Touched all by night to deepest harmony.  
Night, silent mother of the sweetest sounds !  
Whence is the charm, and what, which on the soul  
Falls like a curtain with the shut of eve ?  
Is it from God, or from the Alpine heights  
Of man's own spirit, comes it duly down,  
With the last sigh of the departing day ?  
I know not ; but I know that at the hour,  
When save the bittern's cry, or bird's lone voice,  
Startled from dreamless slumber, all is still,  
Then the soul riseth in her majesty,  
From day as from her death, as if she sprang,  
And finds upon her lips a speech of fire !  
So with a youth returning from a scene,

(We knew him well, and watch'd his early death)  
Seldom, alas ! in Scotland witnessed now,  
The evening sermon at the sacred tent,  
All day his heart has been a furnace hot ;  
What with the joy of June, the lavish warmth  
Of full-blown summer tide with all its flowers—  
The sky where for long weeks no speck of cloud  
Has dared to look upon the sov'reign sun ;  
The blue hills leaning on the sky's far verge,  
Like Atlas wearied with his load of stars ;  
Nearer at hand, the valley clothed with corn,  
While through the deep green masses of the trees  
Peeps the blue ether with her thousand eyes ;  
What with the service of the solemn day,  
The voice of psalms, like incense audible,  
Ascending through the hushed and holy air ;  
The gospel sounding through the calm of noon,  
Harmonious with the river's musing voice,  
And waking echoes from the far-off braes ;  
A thousand faces glowing with the joy  
Of higher worlds, or bathed in blessèd tears ;  
With breezes passing through the burning air,  
Which touch the leaves to grave, sweet melody,  
Like whispers from the Cloud of Witnesses  
Watching and bending o'er the sacred spot !  
The sacramental feast within the church,  
Where waves the banner of redeeming love,

And man now eateth angels' food, and now  
Dippeth his bread in the red wine of heaven  
The melting of the long long splendid day  
Into more hallowed and delightful eve,  
Eve, everlasting autumn of the year !  
Eve, everlasting Sabbath of the day !  
Eve, she is conscious of the hour and scene,  
So slowly, sweetly, solemnly she comes,  
Stealing all noiseless and on tiptoe in,  
To do her soft and mellow ministry ;  
She hushes harsh and inharmonious sounds,  
The wail of curlew, hum of angry bee ;  
She tones the river to a flute-like note,  
She hangs above yon mountain in the south,  
So dark with pines, the rising crescent moon,  
And letteth out the glad stars in their turn,  
Like children, one by one from school dismissed,  
To feed their eyes upon the closing scene ;  
That throng how silent, and how spell-bound now,  
Each face a spirit, and each heart a heaven,  
Under the power of eloquence and eve,  
Nature and genius preaching at one time,  
And emulous in utt'ring " God is Love,"  
Till the Amen arrive, and the deep breast  
Of hundreds gives a sigh, and all is o'er.  
How the youth's heart through the long day has  
burned,



Like those who to Emmaus once repaired,  
Burned in its silence like a buried fire ;  
But now as home, amid the deep'ning dusk,  
He walks through night, the pent volcano bursts,  
And his soul speaks as if the tongue were gone,  
And a live coal from th' altar blazed instead,  
Flashing what seems a new oracular light  
Upon all mysteries of time and space,  
Of God, of evil, of eternity,  
Of heaven and hell, of nature and of man ;  
We, listening the while, dumb as the woods  
Which cluster all around the lonely road.  
Alas ! his word, though glowing and sincere,  
Appears in morning's disenchanting view  
Only a flash of lightning in the gloom,  
Lancing abysses which it could not sound,  
Baring dim forests which it could not burn,  
Revealing darkness it can ne'er dispel !

But soon these pleasures pass, and manhood's joy  
In converse deepens, till 'tis lost in love—  
Love ! child of ecstasy and bride of eve !  
Love, only frenzy that is beautiful,  
The only folly that is half divine,  
The only fault of which no one repents,  
(Yet folly, fault, or frenzy, it is none !)  
The only luxury that never palls,

Th' electric flash which unifies all veins,  
And is an omnipresence in all eyes !  
Love, not the dreg of love, lust low and base,  
But love, the pure attraction of the soul,  
The gravitation of the moral world,  
Which draws together, 'cross the gulf of sex,  
The spirits long predestined to be one—  
Like kindred clouds in skies, or waves with waves,  
Which meet and wonder how they e'er were twain !  
Sure the true canopy of love is eve :  
Behold yon lovers 'neath the moon of May,  
Like children as they are, with hand in hand  
Involved, and full of young and fervent love ;  
Now murm'ring words of dove-like tenderness ;  
And now, as though from different worlds they came,  
No language have they save their looks and sighs,  
Nature's untaught, divine interpreters !  
Above them, like a nuptial torch, the moon  
Sparkles ; below, the landscape smiles serene,  
Mingling fresh tints of green with glows of gold.  
Beside them, like a cherub dropt from heaven,  
A sister sweet, dear bud of joy and hope—  
Just three years come from God her Father's breast,  
Bound in six summers for her God again—  
Moves like a breeze of evening, swift and light,  
Now first, now last, now 'midst, now here, now there,  
Wand'ring at will and speaking to herself ;

Her eyes two fountains of ethereal blue,  
Her brow a plate of placid marble white,  
Her flowing hair a brown autumnal cloud,  
Her voice a sweet and prattling infant stream,  
Her motion music and her shadow grace,  
Herself a soft and second link of love  
Between that simple and impassioned pair !

Or see, beneath the shadows of a room,  
Which eve by entering has sanctified  
Into a shrine for true and lofty love,  
Two minds of genius exchanging thoughts,  
Which glow at last into communion high,  
And there's one spirit in the chamber dim !  
Awful the moment when two souls of fire  
First meet and marry in their mingling eyes,  
And the great passion of a life is born,  
The while the bright and broken summer clouds,  
Beaming o'er July roses, star the sky,  
And "Eloïsa's soul\* pervades the air,"  
The heart's apocalypse, foretaste of heaven !  
The rod of Jonathan† has touch'd the lips,  
The eyes hath opened, and delight has stirred,  
Destined on earth to die, but rise again,  
And mix congenial with eternal joys.

\* "Eloïsa's soul." See Foster's experience, in his Journal, referred to here.

† "Rod of Jonathan." 1 Samuel xiv. 27.

Music at evening is in league with love,  
Whether it pour a liquid melody  
From swan-like neck and voice of sweetest sound,  
Singing some simple darling "Auld Scot's sang,"  
To which the only tribute is a tear,  
Bearing adown its trickling stream a heart.  
Or whether to the grand piano tuned,  
It rises surging, trembling in its power,  
Like wing of unseen angel waving near  
Till, seeking for that angel in the air,  
See her you cannot, but your baffled eye  
Droops down, and finds her o'er the ivory key  
Bending with hand and neck, and brow as white,  
Contrasting with the darkness of her eye,  
And the long locks which fall like shadows round,  
Or the pine-tresses moving in the breeze ;  
And on that breath of music you have soared  
To sudden, rapturous, and sleepless love ;  
Or whether on a harp a spirit plays  
In woman-shape, tall, pale, and lofty-browed.  
A spirit ! many spirits meet in her—  
One resting on the rose-leaves of her lips,  
Two prisoned in her rapt and beaming eyes,  
And others quiv'ring in her fingers fair,  
Which touch the lyre with reverence and love ;  
And keen and thrilling soul-like music comes,  
Which pierces air, and splits the heart in twain ;

Or whether with a spirit a fair maid  
Converses, and draws forth a music sweet—  
For not an instrument but soul it seems,  
That soft, and light, and shadow-like guitar—  
And 'tween that fairy organ and that maid,  
And the soft floating witchery of eve  
You melt in love like vapour in the sun ;  
And whether in or out your mortal frame  
For very ecstasy you cannot tell !  
Vanish these raptures, but their memory  
Remains for ever on the poet soul  
A softened moonlight that shall never set !

The music of the street has ne'er been sung,  
And yet of eve it is a master spell.  
List to yon pibroch high, and quaint and harsh,  
The contradiction of all gentle sounds,  
Like smothered subterranean note it seems,  
Finding through riven rock its way to air,  
Till caught between the streets and stars of night  
It sounds the very soul of Highland song !  
Now seemeth it Macgregor's gathering stern,  
Cutting the dewy curtains of the mist ;  
Now a lament upon some bloody moor ;  
Now a lone mournful cry like ghost's forlorn,  
Wand'ring a glen which has become one grave ;  
Now a bold burst of hope and victory !

Us it transports to early blissful days  
When in thy op'ning gorge, lovely Loch Earn,  
St. Fillan's games\* made August day divine,  
And mid the lofty heather-blooming hills  
The bagpipe lifted up its scream austere,  
Mellowed to music by the autumn air,  
And finding echo shadows soft as sighs,  
The while the loch, the mountains, and the sun  
Seemed living creatures, listening earnestly  
As to the wail of some dead chieftain old ;  
Or, hark the voice of little children strayed,  
Yet guarded by their song as by God's shield,  
And mid the uproar of the evening streets,  
Plaining out fearlessly a simple strain,  
"The Forest's Flowers," or "Birks of Invermay,"  
While tears are dropping through the darkness fast.  
Or hear the lute's note on a balmy eve,  
Some sweet sprite seemeth that hath lost her way,  
And loves her error, and will ne'er return ;  
Or on a Sabbath twilight in the south  
List to the organ or piano's sound,  
Discoursing music—sacred ? secular ?  
What heart can ask, when all around seems heaven,  
And truth and beauty, nature, God, are one !  
Or hark pathetic strain, the stroller's voice

\* Alluding to the Highland games, which used to be celebrated at St. Fillan's village, parish of Comrie, Perthshire.

Broken, yet beautiful, herself in air !  
Wail of an angel seems it in the eve,  
Long lost, but seeking to return to God.  
It soundeth like a tree-crushed breeze's moan,  
Or like some harp, jarred 'cross its sounding strings—  
As, in strange tumult of discordance sweet,  
It shudders up toward the vault of night,  
Most mournful, not least musical of sounds !

Before *the Bed* with reverent knee I bow,  
And cry in awe, How dreadful is this place !  
Here the shed spirit from the Father God,  
Like spark of fire descending, lights and rests,  
And this the point from which it upward soars !  
The bed 'twixt birth and death an isthmus is,  
'Tween two eternities the earthly link.  
Here lies the golden head of infancy,  
Filled with its blessed, soundless, speechless dreams,  
Like gems concealed in some unfathomed main ;  
Here boyhood's eye, or that of thoughtful girl  
Sleeps not, but revels in the midnight moon,  
With thoughts by human tongue unspeakable ;  
Here restless love makes its own couch of fire ;  
Here meditation muses on the past,  
And here the congregation of all dreams  
Assemble in their mystic multitude,  
And make the bed a Bethel or a hell.

Pale company of dreams, to you I come,  
Children ephemeral of sleeping brains,  
Dancing amid their tangled tissue thick,  
As motes of glory in the evening ray !  
Dreams are the soul dissolving in wild showers ;  
They are the midnight mania of man ;  
For during night man's madness creepeth out  
Like wild beast from his forest or his cave,  
And an asylum vast the world becomes.  
Newton has finished his immortal book,  
He sleepeth, and in dreams an idiot is.  
The last word of his Lear Shakspeare has writ,  
He sleeps, and straight like Lear himself he raves.  
Thou shudderest at madness more than death,  
And yet thy sleeping wife Ophelia is—  
And in a moment worse than Hamlet thou !  
Yet beautiful this frenzy of the night,  
And kindly, too, to thought worn, care tossed man,  
An outlet safe to all that's wild and strange,  
Fiercely fermenting in the human soul,  
The madness of the night lessens the day's !  
And what delight dwells in that fairy land,  
That shivered, shattered, lovely clime of dreams,  
That border-country of the universe,  
Between two worlds the land debateable ?  
I sing its beauty—not its horror now—  
Its thoughts and visions dropt from higher spheres.



The scenery of dreams demands a note,  
Most beautiful—fantastic of all worlds !  
'Tis nature in a lovelier, larger shape,  
But with a wildness in her half-shut eye,  
And a strange sheen upon her moon-bound brow  
She wears not in her waking daylight hours !  
The rivers of the dreaming land, how great,  
Yet soundless their enormous currents are,  
The mute majestic Amazons of night—  
Its lakes are seas—its seas inverted skies—  
Its cataracts and thunderstorms are dumb  
As pictures, but how vast and terrible !  
Each flash of lightning is a Phlegethon,  
Each "force" Velino or Victoria\* seems.  
Its forests are immensities of pine,  
Through which you plod for years in endless dream.  
Its mountains are the Andes on the Alps,  
Piled as was Pelion on Ossa high,  
And with the rich hues of a nobler heaven,  
Not snow, but glory resting on their brows !  
And then its evening or its midnight skies !  
Ten suns the other night a dreamer saw,  
Sinking together down the glowing west.  
And when they set new constellations rose,  
Some shaped like scorpions, some like swarms of bees,  
Some lions pawing in the azure waste,

\* See Livingstone.

Some thrones for angels waiting in the sky,  
Some crowns descending upon heroes' heads,  
Till from the blissful torment of that dream,  
He sweltering started, and in wonder woke !

Bewildering too, beyond all fantasy  
The combinations of our various dreams !  
As in that sovereign mountain \* of the west  
Each climate and each zone of earth is found ;  
Eternal snow upon the grisly top,  
The firs of Scandinavia lower down,  
Next England's roses and her milder air,  
Then Italy's luxurious, lightsome clime,  
Last, of the tropics, the broad golden band.  
As in Arcadian orchards it is said  
Old apples grew on the same branch with young,  
Like many autumns mingled into one,  
So in our dreams all seasons mix and meet,  
All lands exchange their forms, their beauties  
blend :

The green of spring appears in July air,  
Unscorched, and over it the autumn sheaves  
Shoot their rich yellow gleam across the scene.  
I stand in dream upon Benvoirlich high,  
And see from thence what never can be seen—  
The broad Tay melting into ocean's arms.

\* "Mountain." Chimborazo.

I lie, in vision, on thy top, Dunmore—\*  
 Dearest to me of all old Scotland's hills—  
 And see not the well-known delicious view,  
 The little village with its peaceful spire,  
 The rivers three, piercing the plain and woods,  
 To meet and marry at yon simple bridge ;  
 Abruchill Castle, like a silver spot  
 Spilt by the sun among the night-like hills,  
 And, shining there in light unquenchable,  
 The gorge of terror† where a fiend inclosed  
 In "hell of waters" howls for evermore,  
 Amid thick woods and torture-riven chasms ;  
 Glenlednick's deep and solitary glen  
 Returning ever a wild torrent's voice,  
 Protesting 'gainst the Caldron's agony,  
 To which resistlessly 'tis hurried on ;  
 The long loved vale through which Kilmeny‡ went  
 Alone, through flowery heath and feathered birch,  
 To meet the visions of celestial day.  
 Loch Earn seen scarcely at the utmost edge,  
 Like a blue breach amidst the clouds of eve,  
 And over it, at twilight, huge Benmore,§  
 A purple pillar propping the red sky ;

\* "Dunmore." A little hill, near Comrie, commanding a beautiful prospect, and bearing a monumental pillar.

† A cataract called the "De'il's Caldron."

‡ "Kilmeny." See Hogg's famous poem in the "Queen's Wake."

§ "Benmore." In Strathfillan.

Far other view from the Dunmore of dream,  
 Now 'tis Jerusalem that fills the vale,  
 For Turleum \* rears his rapt head Olivet,  
 And Kedron murmurs in the room of Earn,  
 And where the Lomond hills † should round the sky,  
 Old Moab's mountains on the Dead Sea frown ;  
 Anon, Edina with her palaces,  
 Her crags, and spires, and pinnacles, appears ;  
 Then the real Athens her Acropolis  
 Lifts over jagged ruins to the sky ;  
 Or Rome's divinest desolation shines ;  
 Or Leman's Lake and Savoy's Alps are seen.

Sweeter than these dreams of the perished past,  
 Recalling hours of vanished ecstasy,  
 Like the proud moment when you first were born  
 Into the state of swimmer, and could breast  
 The summer stream with power—a water god !  
 The day when first dear Bunyan's pictured page  
 Made you a pilgrim in the field hard by,  
 And set you mapping out the wondrous way  
 To Beulah from Destruction's City dark ;  
 The time, when like a castle in the air,  
 The Arabian Nights burst out upon your sky ;  
 The evening prospect from your fav'rite hill ;

\* "Turleum." A hill in Strath Earn.

† "Lomond." In Fife.

What time the red moon in the far north-east  
Rose o'er the twilight mountains like a ghost ;  
The time when Homer, mirrored on the page  
Of Pope's enchanting travesty, looked in,  
Shorn, but still awful in his majesty ;  
The morning when Macbeth in bed you read,  
Then rose in rapture, and through rushing rain  
Ran headlong westward to St. Fillan's games ;  
The noons of night which you have passed alone,  
Feeling as if existence all had ceased,  
Save that high-sailing moon, and your rapt soul  
Pulsing in chorus through the silent night ;  
The hours when on your mind came sudden storms,  
Which caught you up as if on wings of fire,  
And tore you with their agony of joy ;  
The days when men of genius you have met,  
And heard discharging their great souls, like clouds  
In drops electric, or in lightnings broad :  
These, and a thousand passages of life  
Perished from earth, are still preserved in dreams,  
Sharing their shadow like eternity.

In dreams, of *other dreams* the memory  
Returneth oft, like wave in water seen ;  
Shadows of shades ! as if some history \*

\* "Some history." Bulwer, in his "Pilgrims of the Rhine," illustrates a similar thought in his story of the long dream of the sleeping student, involving a regular continuous romance, carried on from night to night.

Were weaving on upon the loom of dreams ;  
As if there were a world within our world,  
As real, as whole, nor more mysterious.  
In dreams some men only begin to live :  
Strangers on earth, in dreaming land they're known,  
And know, and love, and are their nobler selves ;  
Dreams, the great bath of spirits, let me call  
Regeneration nightly of mankind—  
Rush universal to Antæan earth !  
The Atheist, in his dreams, his Father meets,  
And weeps his doubts and darkness all away ;  
The Naamans of the sense, dipping in dreams,  
Like him of old, in Jordan are renewed,  
And little children in the Lord become ;  
The proud are humble, and the cold are kind,  
The dunce a poet, and the child a god,  
When caught in the enchanted round of dream ;  
Nay all, at times, return to their Great Sire,  
Sink on His bosom, taste His holy lips,  
And deem themselves accepted and forgiv'n,  
Sin-shorn, dream-shrived, like God's own sainted ones  
When this great prison-house in light dissolves,  
And death is swallowed up in victory.

To meet the dead in dreams, what fearful joy !  
To feel in one astounding consciousness  
That they are dead, and yet are living still ;

To wonder at the warmness of the grave  
Expressed in those hand-shakings, kisses kind,  
From lips and fingers long since chill in death ;  
To feel you are not, yet should be afraid,  
To hug yourself because you've passed death's point,  
And are familiar with its shadows dim ;  
To gaze all eager on your father's face,  
And deem his death delusion, blasphemy !  
To run all day in pastime with a friend  
Long dead, and say, at last, " Farewell, 'tis night,  
We'll meet to-morrow, and renew our game ;"  
To see a long-lost, loved, lamented child  
Smile sweetly upward in your dreaming face,  
And ask, " Dost think I *thee* could e'er have left ?"  
To ask one loved by thee, more by the grave,  
If she thy passion knew, and did return,  
Or if that secret not ev'n death has told ;  
To question one, a friend, in life who ne'er  
Refused to hear and answer all thy heart,  
" What are the secrets of the gloomy grave ?  
Hell, heaven, and death, and God, what do they mean ?  
And how, beloved one, fares it with thyself ?"  
To watch his lips like curtains of a shrine,  
Opening to answer, while the eyes prepare  
To dart their portion of the thrilling truth,  
And all your dreaming soul's one earnest ear ;  
When lo ! in shock of sudden agony,

You start—you wake—and it is but a dream !  
 And the dark curtains fold themselves again ;  
 More dreadful still to fancy he has told  
 The secret, and to find when you awake,  
 It with the dream is blotted out for ever !

In vision, once a poet\* found himself  
 Upon a mail-coach—crowded with the dead,  
 All dead—and all his once familiar friends ;  
 Strange talk they held, strange laughter rang around,  
 He, in his wonder, as a shadow dumb,  
 And wondering most of all how *he* was there ;  
 Alas ! not long till the wild dream was read,  
 And he again in that dead coach was found.

Behold the “ Prince of Dreamers ” in the “ den : ”  
 Immortal Bunyan, Shakspeare of the barn,  
 ‘Thou brawny tinker, with the fire of God  
 Burning within thine eyes, thy breath a torch—  
 All day a stalwart minister of Christ,  
 From grasp of demons plucking living brands ;  
 At night, a Bard of Israel fast asleep,  
 And dreaming out thy long and golden dream !  
 Approach and view the Dreamer in his rest,  
 His broad and burly forehead, keen, hot eyes,

\* “ A Poet.” Finlay, author of a poem on Wallace, and an early friend of Christopher North.



Now closed like vivid coals in ashes sunk ;  
His auburn ardent locks, just touch'd with grey ;  
His bushy lips, his nostril firm and sharp ;  
His tall and stalwart form, bespeaking strength,  
To bear the burden of Titanic dreams !  
How stern his look—the frown of Dante lies  
Upon the furrows of his dreaming brow :  
For he the City of Destruction sees,  
With sin and death dancing their wild mad dance,  
While Judgment, with a sickle in her hand,  
Sits on a cloud above—biding her time.  
Next mark his eyebrow lifteth up itself,  
And eagerly the dreamer gazeth now,  
For lo ! a man, running himself alone  
Over the plain toward a shining light ;  
Sudden he sinks from view—the dreamer pales  
And sighs, but soon again his cheek is flushed,  
As from the miry slough the man appears  
Burden'd, but lab'ring on toward the light.  
Two figures next in a wide plain are seen,  
One stooped, one stately—in close converse met ;  
Till see ! the first turns eastward o'er the plain,  
Toward a terrible and burning mount,  
And how the dreamer struggles now to rise,  
And tosses on his couch, and mutters, “ Stop !  
Madman, beware ! it is the mouth of hell ! ”  
Till by a shifting of the magic scene,

While sinks the mount o'er the horizon far,  
The man is seen entering the lighted gate ;  
And Bunyan smiles—a sweet and happy smile !

But see, a shadow darkens on his face,  
Pensive in sternness, like a cloud of tears,  
It is the vision of the man i' the 'cage,  
Enoch of hell, translated ere his time  
To that dark realm, and raving in despair ;  
How deep the gloom upon the dreamer's brow,  
Nor does its darkness quite desert his face :  
Till the Interpreter's vast dreary house,  
With all its mysteries in mysteries hid,  
Is left behind, and yonder stands the Cross,  
Streaming with blood—begirt by shining ones—  
The dreamer weeps, but they are tears of joy.  
Then mark his anxious and awe-struck look,  
While 'mid the silence of a soft, deep vale,  
Blooming with lilies, overhung by clouds,  
A dragon and the man appear in fight ;  
Stamping the grass to mud—piercing the air,  
With sighs, and groans, and shrieks, and blasphemies,  
Till his lost sword the man regains, and then  
Thrust through, with bellow loud, the demon flies.

Next see, and as you see, exclaim in doubt :  
Is the dream ended and the dreamer dead ?

So white his cheek, so clammy seems his brow,  
So fixed his attitude, as marble cold ?  
No ! 'tis the shadow of the Vale of Death  
(Through which the man is stumbling on in fear),  
Which thus his heart has hushed, his face has paled,  
Till morn upon his wanderer shall rise.

But now he smiles, as he discerns two men,  
Both moving, brother-like, along the road,  
Which, straight and narrow, leads toward the skies ;  
And smiles again as he beholds a third,  
With reverend aspect, and with solemn look,  
Join for a moment these way-faring men ;  
And smiles again, oh, lofty, beaming smile !  
Like sudden flashing of a seraph's wing—  
As he beholds the second of the three  
Spring up triumphant from a funeral pile ;  
The tongues of fire and fiends left far below,  
The arms of angels stretching out above,  
To carry him by old Elijah's path,  
The nearest way to the Celestial Gate !

And when the man has found another mate,  
And from grim Doubting Castle both have fled,  
And reached the mountains called Delectable,  
And stand upon the summit of Mount Clear,  
And take with trembling hand the prospect glass,

And see a ray or two of living light ;  
Revealing walls of jasper, gates of pearl,  
Rivers of pleasures, streets of beaming gold ;  
Mountains of spices and frankincense piled ;  
Gardens, nay, continents of blooming flowers,  
As though the heavenly soil in rainbows ran—  
Vast seas of silver set with golden isles—  
Innumerable sainted crownèd ones ;  
As if the noble portraits of all time  
Had left their gleaming galleries for heav'n,  
And here were walking, living evermore,  
Shewn in the light of uncreated day ;  
And feel that all this scene of wonder rich,  
Is but a “ little ” of the glorious “ Place.”—  
Oh ! then the soul of Bunyan, which sustained  
Unshrinking and unwaking all the load  
Of Sinai hanging o'er his pilgrim's head,  
The Valley of the Shadow with its fear,  
The triumph of old Faithful's martyrdom,  
Can this great rapture now no more endure—  
But starts, and wakes ; and, lo, it is a dream !

He sleeps again—and dreams—and a strange joy  
Of pleasure and of strong surprise combined,  
Shines like a moonbeam on his sleeping face ;  
For there again appear the well-known twain  
Descending from the hills, but going on,

Straight as two sun-rays to God's city high !  
Then mark a bitter smile upon his lip,  
As through a little narrow crooked lane  
He notes a fool ent'ring the heavenward way.  
Poor Ignorance ! that smile is all too harsh  
For such a blind and stupid child as thou !  
Reserve it rather, dreamer, for *this* form :  
Tall as a giant, as a hermit old,  
" Lust hard by hate " met in his goatish eyes,  
His ears once lifted list'ning to the sky,  
But hearing nothing from the higher spheres,  
And now drooped down like the deaf adder's closed,  
While through the fixed sneer on his sensual lips,  
'The chilly whisper issues, " There's no God !  
Fools ! from your dream 'tis long since I awaked ;  
Shadows yourselves, you chase an empty shade !"  
While they in doubt seem lost and stagger back,  
As from a blow dealt by a hand unseen ;  
And he pursues his solitary way,  
With hollow laughter ringing on the wind !

But now sure 'tis the witching time of night,  
When deep sleep falleth upon men and shades !  
For see the pilgrims nodding on their path,  
Embodied dreams, a dreaming of themselves,  
And Bunyan cries, " This is Enchanted Ground—  
Land of weird mists and wand'ring bubbles strange,

Of settles drooping with untimely sleep,  
And arbours, leaning o'er the pit of hell—  
Like men benumbed, besotted with the cold,  
Who lie down languid in luxurious snows,  
And wake no more—how many pilgrims are!  
Awake, arise! quit you like men—be strong!”  
And, at his trumpet voice, the vapours break  
The Enchanted Ground swoons by, and Beulah bright  
Dawns, like autumnal morn, upon his soul.

Autumn and spring in one o'er Beulah shine,  
The turtle's voice and reaper's song are met,  
And vernal flowers with ripe corn intermix;  
The sun is soft and low, but never sets,  
And o'er him, e'en at noon, the city stands,  
Faint, but distinct, like far off Alpine peak;  
While near at hand there glimmer through the groves  
Like sunbeams gone astray, the Shining Ones,  
Beck'ning the pilgrims to pursue their steps.  
The vine is there, discolouring the wheat  
Into a richer beauty, while the bride,  
Linked with the bridegroom, pass, loaded with bliss.  
And there are times when, in the evening air,  
Bells from the city ring, and voices loud  
Cry out, “Salvation cometh! thy reward,  
Daughter of Zion, is before thee now!”  
Nay, there are moments many in the day,

When, 'stead of sun, the city in the sky  
Stands up alone, one diamond, streaked with gold,  
And shining with such lustre, that the soul  
Of Pilgrim sickens with his strong desire,  
And cries, "Oh, that I wings had like a dove,  
To flee away and reach that blissful coast!"

Beulah is past, and to the dreamer's eye,  
Which shadows at the sight, a coal-black stream,  
Canopied o'er with moving mists and clouds,  
All bridgeless, save for these, appears in view.  
Is this the period of the pilgrimage?  
The prospect from Mount Clear to end in this—  
That boatless, bridgeless, black, and turbid stream!  
No city now is seen, no bells are heard,  
The angel shapes are fled, and crooked forms,  
With angry faces, and with gestures wild,  
Dispute the passage—the great darkness spot,  
Darkness as of a cavern deep and large,  
Lowering beyond the fierce and lampless waves!  
Yet in the pilgrims step, with solemn smile,  
And face and feet alike resolved to cross;  
And though one trembles, for a moment sinks,  
Is lost, 'tis but to reappear again,  
Till both attain the brink, and then the gloom  
Flies like a guilty thing, the river dark  
Imbibes a glory on its sullen surge;

Two Shining Ones upon the bank appear  
To meet the pilgrims, clasp them in their arms,  
And bear them up toward the city high,  
Light as clouds rise upon the morning wind.  
And then again the bells begin to sound  
With bridal music, and the trumpets loud  
Mix with and deepen the deep harmony ;  
And o'er the walls celestial faces look,  
Like evening stars upon the verge of heaven,  
And then, just as the city opes its gates,  
And through the sudden breach the glory shines  
A moment, ere the portals close again,  
A strong wish through, like dart, the dreamer shoots,  
That he were in ; and now the scene is shut,  
The wond'rous dream is o'er, Bunyan awakes  
And finds a crown immortal on his head,  
Its centre truth, its circlet poetry !

When is devotion's noon ? the noon of night !  
When do the joys of heaven to earth descend ?  
At night, be sure ; and as night flowers perfume  
The secret, soundless, yet enamoured air  
More than morn's roses do the dewy dawn,  
So 'tis at night, or in the hallowed eve,  
That richest scents from heaven's gardens come,  
Like perfumes of Ceylon upon the breeze,  
Reaching the sailor on his lonely watch,



A hundred miles away across the deep,  
Like smell of island "field that God hath blest."  
At night the child uplifts his awestruck face,  
And lisps his little hymn, like evening bird ;  
At night the mother, o'er her sleeping babe,  
Pours her full heart in fervent yearning cry,  
Or makes the rocking cradle sing her prayer.  
At night the youth steals to his chamber still,  
And for long hours his bed a Peniel \* makes,  
Wrestling with God in prayer, and crying out,  
" My soul for God doth thirst, the living God !  
And follows hard to find thee, Father mine."  
At night the voice of psalms ascendeth clear,  
Like cry of victory, when battle's done,  
Or song of reapers, when the harvest's o'er,  
Speaking of holy triumph, heavenly rest,  
Rounding as with an arch the toils of day,  
And light and darkness blending into heaven !  
At night, from dungeon and from cave obscure,  
Songs of divine defiance have upswelled,  
Which tyrants had to hear, and could not stop  
On their resistless rush to God's own throne.  
At night, 'mid Scotland's mountain palaces,  
The children of the Covenant sent up  
Their daring psalms, which pierced the skies, and struck  
Upon the very bosses of God's shield,

\* Genesis xxxii. 30.

Upon the very sinews of His arm,  
And said, "Awake, awake ! why sleepest Thou ?  
Stir up, as in the ancient days, Thy strength !"  
While eagles, roused at the bold notes, awoke,  
And screamed in chorus, and the cat'ract's voice  
Opposed, then mingled with the imperial strain,  
And in the startled wilderness was linked  
A threefold chord of wild and holy sound !

But night herself one act of worship is :  
The sighs of breeze, the whispers of the leaves,  
The sounds so sweet and psalm-like of the streams,  
The sea's deep fitful boom, the note of bird,  
The sunken, solemn voice of man, the whoop  
Of melancholy owl, the fox's cry,  
The shoot of meteor, and the fall of star,  
The unearthly lustre of the broad full moon,  
The stir of ferns upon a thousand hills,  
The bleat of solitary sheep, the note  
Of nightingale, lone trembling through the dark,  
The half-heard cry of distant waterfall,  
The start of steed upon his darksome way,  
The shade that falls upon the soul of man—  
All, all proclaim that with day's death there drops  
A veil from heaven's divinest countenance,  
That earth by night is lifted from her place,  
TO WORSHIP AND TO FEEL A NEARER GOD.

BOOK SIXTH.

NIGHT, A TERROR.

## ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

NIGHT'S Terrors—The Wind—The Thunder—The Earthquake—The Fire—The Scene at Santiago—"Mount Pilatus"—Sleeplessness—Horrors of Sleep—Nightmare—The Vampire Bat—Warnings—Apparitions—Vexing and hopeless Thoughts—The "Final Fear of Night."

## BOOK SIXTH.

### NIGHT, A TERROR.

“OF terrors of the night,” says Israel’s bard,  
“Thou need’st not be afraid.” This is our theme,  
Dark theme ! but pregnant, as the sky with stars,  
With thoughts which awe but not o’erwhelm the soul,  
Rising to meet and grapple with their force,  
As the old oak boughs wrestle with the storm,  
Which wrings and tears out all their latent strength,  
And makes them giants in a Titan war,  
So do night’s terrors brace the soul of man,  
And prove that soul a power and terror too !

At night the wind uplifts his wildest voice,  
And finds fit audience in a trembling world,  
Whether he snaps from trees the leaves, like rags  
Of hostile banner plucked by hostile hand,

Or whether their deep roots he teareth up,  
And, shamefully inverted, throws them down,  
Twisted and curled, like serpents, on the earth ;  
Or whether through the fierce recusant boughs  
He howls, a tortured torturer, all night long,  
No quarter given or asked, no triumph reached,  
Only two sounds tormented into one,  
Telling the story of a battle drawn ;  
Or whether, whistling through the midnight sails,  
He seems a demon piping in the blast,  
In joy o'er shattered ships and drowning men ;  
Or whether, in a low beseeching tone,  
He sigheth at the lattice, as though one  
Rejected both of God and man were there,  
Seeking to enter in and find a home—  
Always a mystery, thou midnight wind,  
And fear art thou, wild wand'rer through the sky !

Mixed with his voice, the thunder oft is heard,  
Filling the pauses in his raving cry,  
With hoarser, hollow, and hungrier roar,  
Back rolling through the dark, as to his den  
The lion, with deep bellow, doth retire ;  
Or, flutt'ring over head, like some vast wing  
Strained in the stress of fast despairing flight ;  
Or holding in his breath—portentous pause !  
And then, when you imagine he is gone,

Flashing his lightnings in your shrinking face,  
And shouting, like a hundred shouting fiends,  
Above your stiffened hair and trembling bed ;  
Or, after hours have passed, and you have sunk  
In calm and happy dreams, a sudden growl  
Proclaims the Blatant Beast of thunder back,  
New girt with terror, crested new with fire,  
For one last desperate assault, ere day  
Shall pale his lightnings and his fury check ;  
Or, as he does at length retreat, you hear  
His broken, breathless, intermittent howls  
Dragging along the sky, as from the mouth  
Of some great creature of the wilderness,  
Wounded, but unsubdued, die slow away.

“ They that be drunken drunk are in the night.”\*  
And so with all the world's fell energies,  
Bacchantes all, they madden with the gloom,  
Leaping and foaming, wallowing again ;  
Breaking at night against some iron coast,  
One raving maniac becomes the sea ;  
Whene'er the last light of the day has set,  
She heaves a sigh like that of slave set free,  
A sigh which stirs her monster form, like breeze,  
Although all winds be hushed in evening's calm.  
Then, with a sudden roar, like whale harpooned,

\* 1 Thessalonians v. 7.

She throws one wave enormous on the shore,  
A gauntlet of defiance flung to earth ;  
Then pauses, list'ning for the blast which comes  
And mating with her madness shrieketh shrill,  
And pulls her onwards by the hoary hair,  
And with her dasheth on the grim dark crags ;  
Till wounded, 'angry, shattered by the shock,  
She writhes, and foams, and shrieks, till morning's ray  
Reveals the precipice unharmed ; the sea,  
Weary and weak, and panting in retreat,  
And in a deep and dismal undertone  
Cursing the shore, the storm, herself, and all !

All night the Demon of the earthquake, too,  
Awakes and tosses on his dreadful couch,  
Finding himself alone, like one in grave  
Buried alive, who turneth round and round  
Amidst the vacant darkness of the earth,  
Till, feeling all the horrors of his state,  
He lifts a shriek mixed with a struggle strong,  
Which, were despair omnipotence, would turn  
The world itself and nature upside down !  
Thus doth the giant, dungeoned in the earth,  
At times from slumber start, and turn, and scream,  
And shake the pillars of his prison house.  
Hark how the mountains echo his fell howl,  
And rear, and reel, as in a balance swung !



Fire finds its fittest element at night ;  
By day an idle, timid, pallid thing,  
Winking and stooping to his parent sun ;  
At night he blazes up into himself,  
The transient tyrant of the light-left world ;  
Knowing his time is short, his haste is great,  
His aim is earnest, hate unquenchable ;  
Now writhes himself around some ancient bridge,  
Now a great pile of houses he assails,  
And resteth not till it is all consumed,  
From the low dens to the high holds of sin,  
And the foul flame pollutes the midnight sky ;  
Now a quiet cottage, with its sleeping babes,  
He lappeth up with a weird, fiendish laugh,  
Then hurries conscious from the horrid work ;  
Now round some stately pile of piety  
He curleth, first contemptuous, till ire  
Is stirred by its resistance cold and stern,  
And then he dasheth at it with a shout,  
Rendeth its arches, shakes its cupola,  
And turns it from a sacrifice of stone  
Into one huge and sounding altar fire.  
Now a hillside he clothes with dusky flame ;  
Now with hushed breath and shaded spark he creeps  
Into the centre of a forest thick,  
Deceiver and destroyer at one time,  
Till he has coiled around some vast old tree,

From the deep root to the last crackling leaf,  
And then his kingdom comes ; the loosened sparks  
Throughout the wood fly thick and riotous,  
And it becomes his own ; the leaves are his,  
The ground below glows with his footsteps bright,  
The ant-hills with their million peoples burn,  
The snakes are scorched, the birds' nests shrivel up,  
And as he passes how the smote hills shine !  
And when the forest and the fire are one,  
He neighs a far-heard challenge to the heav'ns,  
" Ye feeble stars, behold the sky I've made !"  
Or see him on the sea assert his might  
Amid the waste of waters, where his name  
Has lost its charm, its terror, and its power,  
And where his rival seems to reign alone.  
Sudden within the hold a voice is heard  
'Tis part a growling, part a choking sound ;  
The mariners stare wild and whisper " Fire !"  
And fire it is, up-springing through the gloom,  
Stifling the men who cried, seizing the shrouds  
With keen and crooked finger, dashing through  
The water streaming round him, making masts  
Pillars of quaking flame, turning the ship  
Into one hideous, howling, floating hell,  
Which all the waves of ocean cannot quench.

Or see him in his drunkenness of power

Assail the worship of the Beautiful,  
And burn the beautiful who worship her.  
In Santiago's lighted church are met  
Two thousand of the ladies of the land,  
To honour her they deem the Queen of Heaven ;  
A blaze of light above, of loveliness,  
A blaze below—charming seraphic scene !  
How coveted of men these lovely dames.  
But fire is there, and covets them far more ;  
Sudden he stoopeth from the starry roof,  
And in one frightful instant loveliness  
And love into calcined corruption change,  
“ Burning instead of beauty,”\* howls for smiles  
Succeed, and one wild welter of despair !  
Look down, O daring Muse, into the midst,  
And follow Fire in all his doings wild :  
Behold, two sisters clasp, and kiss, and die ;  
Yonder one starts and shrieks, and runs like nymph  
Surprised amidst a forest all in flames,  
Till her faint limbs collapse, blacken, and drop ;  
Here one all high and still her pale face lifts,  
And with her last breath Ave Maria cries ;  
There one, escaped herself, misses her friend,  
Returns to seek her, finds, and both are lost,  
Perishing in one friendly waft of fire ;  
One knots her 'kerchief round her burning limb

\* Isaiah.

With fire-lit hand, to mark her body out  
And, ah ! what shrieks, what sobs convulsive rise,  
Melodious shrieks, the sobs of nightingales—  
It is as if a wave of hell let loose  
Had burst within the palaces of heaven,  
And scorched the angels on their golden thrones !  
And, hark ! the crackling and the breathing hard  
Of the swift sweeping yet laborious flames ;  
And see ! when they remove the shroud of fire,  
The apocalypse of horror that ensues—  
And, oh ! of martyred beauty, those grim carts,  
Driven from the smoking church on trembling wheels !  
But to the air I lift my weary eye,  
And o'er these blackened corpses seem to see  
A troop of spiritual bodies, sainted ones,  
Sad, and yet smiling o'er the ghastly scene.  
Sad as they look upon the scorched shells,  
Glad as they feel their souls serene and safe,  
While, with a look of sorrow and of love,  
In one commingled, and in both divine,  
The Virgin Mother from above stoops down,  
And welcomes them into unending joys !

### Midnight among the Alps ! Pilatre\* stern

\* "Pilatre." See "Anne of Geierstein," where Scott mentions the tradition of Pilate's ghost being sometimes seen washing his hands as if from the blood of Christ, in a lake called the Infernal Lake, where it is said he drowned himself; and at such times tempests are said to arise with great fury, and Mount Pilatre (or Pilatus) to get dark and lowering.

Rises upon my vision, with the shade  
Of Pilate washing in the "Infernal Lake,"  
And thus let me essay to paint the scene :—

## MOUNT PILATUS.

In the gloom Pilatus stands,  
Washing aye his gory hands,  
Crying to himself alone,  
Half a shriek and half a moan—  
"Shadow I, is *that* a shade?  
It has never yet decayed,  
Since the hour when hapless I,  
Upon a spur of Calvary  
(With those eyes so calm and meek,  
With that pale and ghastly cheek,  
With that brow so lofty, lone,  
Rising like a silver throne,  
Silver, not with years, but care,  
Standing quiet before me there!)  
In dreadful doubt and terror cried,  
Like dying wretch with thirst adried,  
For "water, water;" it was brought,  
And I washed my hands, methought,  
In a wave which, bubbling up,  
Of red blood became a cup,  
While a voice rang in mine ear,  
"Wash, and wash, for ever there;  
Wash thy hands, and wash thy head,  
Wash thee till this man be dead;  
Yes, and after long years pass,  
Be this wave thy looking glass,

Shadowing the hopeless woe  
 Which with thee shall onward go,  
 From Calvary to Alpine hills,  
 Where to end thine earthly ills—  
 Banish'd, tortured, lonely, left,  
 Thou shalt seek a sullen cleft,  
 Where a lake in wrath upcurled  
 From the first day of the world,  
 Waits for thee, and pants the while,  
 To give its first and latest smile,  
 As thy wrecked and wretched soul  
 To perdition down shall roll !”

I laughed at it, and took no heed—  
 Fiend-driven, I went and did the deed ;  
 And now for ages here I stand  
 On this dim and dreary strand,  
 Heaving up my lonely stone,\*  
 Pouring out my weary moan,  
 Filling aye my riddled sieve, †  
 Seeking aye my soul's reprieve ;  
 But it stoops not from the mountains,  
 And it wells not up the fountains,  
 Down the wild blast comes with clouds,  
 Bringing demons all in crowds ;  
 How they mock me at my task !  
 As with fiendish glee they ask,  
 “ Pilatus hath a single stain,  
 Yielded to wave, or wind, or rain ?  
 Do thy fingers blush no more  
 With that pure and God-like gore ?

\* Alluding to Sisyphus.

† Alluding to the punishment of the Danaides in hell.

Know that Christ's blood, when spilt in ire,  
Is an everlasting fire,  
And the worm that never dies  
Round thy neck for ever lies !”  
Then, and oh ! how oft, alas !  
Since here I stood, soft breezes pass ;  
But they minister no calm,  
And they drop no drop of balm,  
Nay, they whisper words of fear,  
“ Who is this wretch ? what doth he here ?  
Why, fiends, not burn him limb by limb ?”  
“ BECAUSE HELL HATH REJECTED HIM.”

Morning comes, no morn to me,  
Evening smiles, I still must dree  
My deep woe, and midnight dark  
Hears me at my labour stark ;  
Stars look out and gaze at me,  
Million eyes above I see,  
Each like His at Calvary,  
But with a dart in every beam,  
And with a fire in every stream,  
Till all scathed and shrunk I sink,  
Down upon the water's brink,  
Shading myself with bloody hands  
From the stern heaven that o'er me stands.

Sometimes my wife beside me seems,  
Her eye still laden with her dreams,  
Her voice still moaning, Pilate, stay,  
Beware of what thou dost to-day !  
In vision I have seen the Man,  
With bleeding brow and visage wan,

Surrendered by thy will to die  
Upon the cross at Calvary.  
And o'er that cross I saw a throne,  
And the judge that sate thereon  
Was the God of earth and heaven ;  
He into thy power is given  
At whose bar thou, I, and all,  
Must appear to stand or fall.  
Dream of dread ! I shrieked to see,  
Beware lest it be read by thee !”

And now I see a ghastly form  
Astride upon a sullen storm ;  
His brow it is a midnight cloud,  
His dress it is a seamless shroud ;  
His eye it is the comet's glare,  
Dabbled o'er with blood his hair,  
A rope all scarlet winding there !  
Blistered and black his lurid lips,  
Like edges of the moon's eclipse,  
Which erst the Master's mouth drew nigh,  
Sealing the damnèd treachery.  
Ever at his neck he touches,  
O'er a bag he eager crouches—  
A bag that rattles like the hail,  
Or the shiver of struck mail,  
He stands by me ; the blast shrieks by,  
And he looks me in the eye,  
And cries, “ Pilatus, knowest thou me ?  
We are twins in infamy,  
Judas I, this bag the price  
Of my raging avarice,  
This rope the badge of suicide.  
Oh ! that with me thy soul could ride,



Tied in torment to each other,  
 Like a demon and his brother,  
 In my endless misery.  
 'Twere relief to sail with thee ;  
 But I leave thee to the hell  
 Thine own sin hath earned so well,  
 And if one devil rides with me,  
 Seven are left to wash with thee ! ”  
 I see him gain the blast before,  
 And am alone, I and this gore ;  
 Gore eternal ! Crucified,  
 Shall Thy wrath ne'er be satisfied ?  
 Thy murderers thou didst forgive,  
 And saidst to dead and lost ones, live !  
 Me, me Thy murderer, set free,  
 Look on this blood and pity me ! ”

No answer from the midnight came—  
 None, or in words of lurid flame !  
 For, lo ! a thunder-cloud in wrath  
 Lowered above the mountain path,  
 And on the “ Infernal Lake ” there fell  
 A shadow like the frown of hell,  
 And wingèd lightnings cast a glow  
 On all the woods and hills below,  
 And a furious hurricane  
 Rushed infatuate o'er the plain ;  
 But through the gloom I marked afar  
 The secret shining of a Star,  
 Breaking 'mid a murky cloud,  
 Like a soft eye though a shroud,  
 And it looked upon the lake,  
 And it left on it a flake  
 Of mildest splendour, like the beam

Of moonshine on a lonely stream ;  
And then I saw the lost one rise  
With a glory in his eyes,  
And a hope that pierced the skies !  
Full the Star looked down on him,  
Lighting up his visage dim,  
And his hands, all barked with blood,  
Shone out gold in that bright flood ;  
And then, like night, the landscape o'er,  
Darkness fell—I saw no more.

The "Infernal Lake," and Pilate's shadowy form  
Sweep past, and there appears of sleep the hell,  
The terrors which beset the sleeping couch.  
But sleeplessness hath horrors of its own,  
Which must, although with rapid note, be sung.  
Dreadful those tossings to and fro till day,  
Those nights of wearisome and endless length,  
In which you dread, and yet desire the morn.  
Those hours which strike upon the waking ear,  
Jarring it into nervous agony,  
And stabbing slumber when 'tis newly born.  
That counting o'er of numbers, lying still  
Like stiffened corpse, repeating rounded rhymes,  
Vain supplications to the power of sleep,  
Who as a courted, flattered maid is coy !  
Those fears of madness, and its vigils wild,  
Worse still that rush of "vexing thoughts" which comes  
Instead of cheerful dreams, and will not cease,

Recalling sins and sorrows, follies vain,  
Shames and disasters, disappointed hopes,  
Hatreds, chagrins, and melancholies dark,  
Doubts and despairs, and pours them on your soul,  
Which lies all prostrate, crying with the bard  
Of Israel, "Every morning I of new  
Do chastisement receive ;"\* and worst of all  
The thought and feeling that a million beds  
Are restless in their misery like yours,  
And sending up the same sad trembling song.  
Oh ! how unlike the cradle's rocking sweet,  
Or the dear laugh of slumb'ring innocence !  
Yet, when all hopeless you are lying there,  
Often like hushaby from mother's lips !  
Or a soft dew from heaven, falls a sleep,  
Bedropped with gladsome dreams, and you are blest,  
As grateful, calm, and humble you arise.

But some from sleep, who never seem to rise,  
So long their dark eternity of dream ;  
Bound in the nightmare's dim and heavy chains.  
We sleep, yet sometimes fancy that we wake,  
But wake beneath a world's incumbent mass.  
We grope for light, we pant for breath, we strive  
To lift the load unearthly, but in vain.  
Sometimes we think a serpent is entwined

\* Ps. lxxiii. 14.

Around our neck in close and clammy folds ;  
And though we pant and cry, and shout to wake,  
Yet the grasp deepens as the dream endures.  
Sometimes a vague and nameless horror comes,  
From whence, or what, or whither is unknown.  
Sometimes we feel upon our sleeping couch  
Of *utter weariness* the strangest sense,  
Asleep, and yet as restless as the fiends.  
Sometimes a lion at us roaring springs ;  
We rise to meet his rage, but ever prone  
We fall, and feel upon our throat his paw.  
An enemy pursues us, we retreat,  
But straining some high hedge or wall to climb,  
Our footing fails us, or our limbs dissolve,  
Like lines of gossamer in autumn noon.  
Sometimes we dream that sin of hopeless guilt,  
The sin against the Holy Ghost itself  
Has, by some mystic transference, been laid  
Upon our heads, as ours was borne by Christ.  
Sometimes, as with that dreamer in the dream  
Of Bunyan, the Great Judgment Day of God  
Breaks o'er our couch ; and as our turn arrives  
We start, draw back, and tremble, and awake,  
And morn and mercy still are shining round.

Beneath the Andes' shade a sleeper sleeps—  
It is the hush of sweet and southern night.

Through groves of cocoa and cinnamon  
A gentle breeze the open window gains,  
And sheds its scented coolness, while the Cross  
Broadens amid the darkness like a dawn—  
Serene his slumber, and in sleep he sees  
A tree above him, through whose fan-like leaves  
A zephyr whispers, while a stream beneath  
Pours its low lullaby, of sleep the seal,  
Till all at once from out that tree an asp  
Springs at his breast, and deals a fiery wound.  
He wakes in agony—his dream is real—  
The lulling sound is still within his ear,  
But turned to a dire discord, as he feels  
That he is not alone upon the bed.  
And what the fell companion of his couch?  
Is it a corpse dropt by a demon, who  
Was haling it away from burial brief?  
No, worse! it is a warm and living fiend,  
The vampire bat, red spectre of the night,  
Who, smelling the still flowing blood of sleep,  
Has entered on his smooth and leathern wings,  
And with the deep hypocrisy of hell  
Is setting a dread death to music sweet,  
And soothing, flatt'ring, kissing as he kills,  
For dead the sleeper in few moments is;  
Partly in horror at that hideous mate,  
And partly that his vital blood is gone;

The asp hath stung—he hath awoke too late !  
This is one horror, but on “horror’s head”  
Horrors more frightful still hath fancy piled,  
Dreaming that those who perish ’neath the ban  
Of that old Roman church which Britain hates,  
Unshrived and unabsolved die not nor rot,  
But feed on their own flesh ; and when it fails  
Sail out on moon and darkness loving wings,  
And seek the bed of enemies or friends !  
A sleeper sleeps, a pang shoots through his face—  
He wakes—the demon and his tooth are there,  
Fixed in his quiv’ring cheek like lion’s bite.  
And lo ! against the pale and waning moon,  
Just setting as in terror in the west,  
The spectre seems an old familiar face,  
A friend’s and fiend’s in one—the wretched man  
Sinks down at once deranged, despairing, dead !  
And hark ! the shudd’ring yet triumphant scream,  
With which the vampire seeks the grave again,

Still eager biting at the viewless air !  
Toward the sleeping bed disasters oft  
Before their time approach and hover there,  
Shedding down fears, forebodings, grisly dreams,  
Like plumes of coming ravens, by the winds  
Torn off and tossed before their fatal flight,  
And dropping at the feet of doomèd men.

Be it that these are whispers from the abyss,  
Or outcomes from the soul's own prescient power.  
The mother in her dream beholds her child,  
Sinking in some dark error worse than death,  
And wakens, crying "'Tis all over now !"  
The wife, whose tears her couch have waterèd,  
For her brave sailor-lord upon the sea,  
Stands in her vision near him on the mast,  
And sees him falling, grasps his skirts in vain ;  
And ere a little month has past she hears  
How on that very night his foot had slipped,  
His comrades not aware themselves till morn,  
While to her heart the telegram had sped  
Across the foaming surge and midnight black.  
The murdered man stands by his murderer's couch  
Long ere the deed is done, and mercy seeks ;  
The friend, an enemy doomed to become,  
Feels a deep rush of hatred in his dream,  
Which, after many years, is there again,  
Melting the tender, long-stretched tie in twain.  
Nay, sometimes, in a room a dreamer stands  
Beside a bed where *he himself* is laid,  
Sobbing his last, while in a corner frowns  
A timepiece grim, marking the very hour  
When he must quit this earthly scene and die.  
It strikes—he wakens—" Pshaw ! 'tis but a dream !"  
But, like the ghost to Brutus, *it returns.*

Sacred to superstition, Night, art thou  
From immemorial time, mother of shades,  
And sounds, and omens of the spirit-land.  
At night the death-watch strikes his sullen knell ;  
At night the chests and tables heave and yawn,  
With drear and rasping sounds like that of breeze,  
Moaning its way through the dry ribs of death !  
At night the names of men are heard pronounced,  
As in the dismal roll-call of the damned.  
And who that summons ere has disobeyed ?  
At night the curtains of the bed are drawn ;  
And now a dear, and now a demon face  
Looks in 'mid the pale moonlight, paler still—  
Palest of all the sleeper's brow disturbed,  
While his parched jaws in vain attempt to pray,  
And his eye steadies into madness strong.  
At night old Death has laid his chilly hand  
Upon his victim's brow before the time,  
Who, starting up, has seen the Enemy  
Sole sitting by the couch with lurid smile.  
At night, the doomèd wanderer coming home,  
Has met *himself* amid the dusky woods,  
Or found himself upon his favourite chair.  
At night, the inquirer seeking for the cause  
Of death at the grave's mouth, becomes aware  
Of one looking across with earnest eye,  
And who begins a talk that never ends !



At night a lover seeks his trysting-tree —  
She's there—O strange ! before him, but no voice  
Issues from her pale lips, which shed a kiss  
Cold as an icy wave as she dissolves,  
And he stands trembling, and alone with night.  
At night two friends encounter on a road  
Obscured by aged oaks—they greet—they talk—  
Sharply debate about the fate of souls,  
Till one at last, hard-pressed in argument,  
Cries " I am dead—am damned, and I should know  
What the eternal doom of those God hates !"  
And like a shadow in the wood he's gone !  
At night a knock is heard, there enters one—  
A long strayed son, who falls in's father's arms,  
And kneels in concert with his father's prayers.  
But when the witching time of night arrives,  
Hears in his turn a knock, and shrieks " They come !"  
And as his slow steps drag toward the door,  
His sire pursuing with reluctant foot,  
Sees three seduced and murdered maids, who cry,  
" Thee ours, and we are yours, in wedding robes  
Of fire, that wasteth, winketh not for aye ;"  
And mixed in ghastly dance with them he fades.

Nor least among these dreadful fears of night,  
The story of the founder of a race,\*

\* See Mrs. Shelley's " Journal in Switzerland."

Who, for some nameless sin, was doomed to rise  
From his mysterious grave, and kiss to death  
All the young children of his fated house.  
What time the midnight moon is shining bright,  
See him, in steel complete, but beaver up,  
Through the dark avenue approaching slow ;  
Beneath the castle wall his form is lost,  
But soon the gate swings back, a step is heard,  
And lo ! he enters at the chamber door,  
Where lie the blooming youths in cradled sleep ;  
And as he kneels and kisses their smooth cheeks,  
Which shrivel up, like rosebuds nipped by frost,  
Eternal sorrow sits upon his brow,  
And with a sigh profound, as though the sea  
Were heaving all its anguish in one sob,  
Shudd'ring and swift he back to night retires.

Through the dark midnight, or in sleepless morn,  
Oft dreary thoughts their demon heads uplift,  
Like serpents wakened by the streamers' glare.  
Sometimes the soul, upon its restless couch,  
Ponders of wide humanity the woes,  
And lists the sighs and yells and groanings deep  
Which from the hell on earth are rising up,  
Perplexed why all this suffered ever was  
In the dominion of a great good God ;  
And then, like bird attracted by a light

Shining through iron bars, it beats in vain  
Against the problem, Whence doth evil come ?  
Which, with a fearful fascination, draws  
The soul towards, then spurns it back again,  
With battered, bleeding wing, and screaming cry.  
Sometimes we sail into the shade of death,  
Like bark, with a small taper at its prow,  
Piercing a river deep below the ground,  
'Midst frowning cliffs, cold waves, and slipp'ry stones,  
Returning hopeless and with mangled hands.  
Sometimes we take a spirit in the pit,  
As Sterne his captive in that dungeon dim,  
And try to gauge and sum his misery,  
Protracted through a thousand dismal years,  
Then multiply him by a million more,  
Then, with a hasty hand and bloodshot eye,  
We drop the curtain on that home of pain.  
Sometimes we follow Richter in his dream,  
We mount the summit of the universe,  
Upon its highest pinnacle we stand,  
And find of fire a solitary flag  
Streaming, without a standard-bearer there ;  
Or plunge into the nethermost abyss,  
And see upon the far foundation-stone  
The withering inscription, " There's no God !  
The absolute exists not, save in dream ;  
The All is all the God thou e'er canst know,

And that is finite, like the human soul.  
 Away, and hide thy disappointment wild  
 In that lone grave, where ransom there is none !”  
 And sure it is, 'mong thousand fears of night,  
 Its dreams, and ghosts, and storms, and sleepless hours,  
 None for a moment can contend with this  
 Cold gush of orphanhood, like sleety wind  
 From continent of everlasting ice,  
 Crossing the soul, which deems itself a soul  
 No more, but for a moment is a clod ;  
 Till from its brief collapse the warm heart springs,  
 And feels that God and immortality  
 Are dwelling in its secret, glowing core,  
 And cries, “ If not in height or depth, HE'S HERE !”

A nameless seer and poet of the time,  
 Once filled with th' ancient hope and solemn dream  
 Of Christ at midnight coming in the clouds,  
 Thus sang to us :—

#### THE LAST GREAT FEAR OF NIGHT.

UPON a mountain throne  
 I stood myself alone,  
 It was a lovely eve at autumn's close ;  
 The October sun went down,  
 Like a resplendent crown,  
 Reluctantly, methought, to his repose ;  
 While, from behind, the zodiac light  
 Pointed above, in fear, its trembling finger bright.

The mountains silent stood  
Beneath the sky of blood,  
Like coals gigantic, canopied with flame.  
An earthquake shock! they rose  
And lifted up their brows  
Towards some glory, which far-rushing came ;  
The while the hornèd moon shone high,  
With Venus in her arms, upon the southern sky.

The Northern Lights began  
The dark'ning sky to span,  
Between the stars shooting their arrows bright ;  
While the unsetting Bear  
Shook in the northern air,  
As though some storm had stirred his locks of light ;  
And like Pactolus swelled to flood,  
The Milky Way aloft, with its two strange arms, glowed.

Sudden a mystic sound  
Went wailing all around,  
From high or low by me could not be told ;  
But to and fro it rung,  
And loud and high was sung  
A strain—how sad, how sweet, how tenderly outrolled !  
A universal hush,  
Seemed now the world to crush,  
Then slowly stars began to fall,  
Till o'er the earth and heaven there crept one deep black pall.

Dreadful the darkness now,  
The sky one frowning brow,

Seamed here and there with furrows as of fire ;  
 The music, too, is dumb,  
 And up the gloom there come  
 Shrieks, yells, convulsive sobs, and rendings dire ;  
 The fountains of hell's deep are broke,  
 And from their great grave, earth, the sleepers have awoke.

A chariot I hear,  
 It crashes on mine ear,  
 As though a thousand thunders were its steeds ;  
 But not one ray of light  
 Breaks from it on the night,  
 And from its mystery more it terror breeds,  
*The hearse of hell* within the gloom—  
 Is it despatched to bear the damned ones to their doom?

No! 'tis Thy chariot, Christ,  
 Now breaking through the mist,  
 And lo, Thy form of matchless grace appears ;  
 Thine eye the fiery flame,  
 On Thy smooth brow a name  
 Writing, in glory, Thine eternal years,  
 Thy gesture power ; Thy lips do move  
 In eloquence divine ; Thy loftiest crown is Love!

Behind Thee, Light supreme  
 Pours its refulgent beam,  
 Around Thee angels wave their restless wings ;  
 Darkness, a canopy,  
 Above Thee bends for aye,  
 While at Thy feet a fiery torrent springs,  
 Rushing onward in its power,  
 Thy foes 'mong men, fiends, death, and Hades to devour!

I see Thee lift Thine hand,  
In its lustre grand,  
A sudden sunbeam scattering a cloud ;  
But deep the glad surprise,  
Which almost blinds mine eyes,  
As I discern, amid its glory proud,  
A rent, a wound, a scar,  
Like bloody mark of war,  
Of cruel Calvary the sign,  
But living proof that Thou for evermore art mine !

Not all the thunders loud,  
Not all the glory cloud,  
Not all the "many crowns" upon Thy brow,  
So great or lovely are  
As that immortal scar,  
To which all races and all kindreds bow :  
In some a shudder runs throughout,  
While millions hail the sight with an exulting shout.

"Worthy the Lamb," they cry,  
Exalted now on high ;  
Worthiest the blood upon His sceptral hand,  
Shed on that awful day,  
When He for us did pay  
The price that brings us to the heavenly land :  
Salvation to His blessèd name,  
Let earth, and skies, and rocks, and seas, make loud acclaim !

But stay ! the seas are fled,  
And lo, the sun is dead !

And hark! in pain the rocks their bowels tear;  
 The skies together roll  
 And earth into one scroll,  
 Then in a flash of fire they disappear:  
 The stars had fallen long before,  
 And through the void resounds ruin's triumphant roar.

Christ's eye the sun now is,  
 Surcharged with bale or bliss,  
 It looks upon the millions as they come;  
 Some shrivel at His glance,  
 As at Ithuriel's lance,  
 Despair and guilt and terror make them dumb;  
 And, like the leaves in autumn's ire,  
 Heaps upon heaps, they drop into the stream of fire.

"Farthest from Him is best;  
 O give us, give us rest,  
 Ye torrid flames, from that more burning eye:  
 Since rocks no more can crush,  
 And mountains no more rush  
 To hide us in their stern eternity,  
 Come, come, ye flames, with hideous roar,  
 We ask but only this, HIM never to see more!"

In vain they thus do call,  
 In vain the shroud doth fall—  
 The shroud of fire woven by th' unwearied worm;  
 Still the Saviour's eye  
 Follows them where they lie,  
 And still His voice, piercing the savage storm,  
 Whispers, "I loved you, now in pain,  
 But ah! my tears have turned into this fiery rain."



Attracted by His eye,  
 See next the just draw nigh ;  
 Bathed by His beaming smile in sudden light,  
 They smile a sweet return,  
 Their hearts with ardour burn,  
 As their day dawns and vanishes their night ;  
 Along with Him they upward rise,  
 I see their lessening forms, I hear their harmonies—

Deep'ning as they ascend,  
 Ye silent heavens, attend !  
 Or break your silence with a kindred strain,  
 The victory of good,  
 The triumph of Christ's blood,  
 Of heaven and earth the immortal gain,  
 Ring out in loud and lofty tones,  
 Till angels give it back from their transcendent thrones !

Few are the souls who're lost,  
 Poor, poor the infernal boast ;  
 The chaff is small, the wheat is large and clean,  
 The magnet of the skies  
 Hath plucked a mighty prize,  
 The vast majority have rescued been ;  
 Few, few and thin the blasted ears,  
 While rich and rank the harvest of the heav'n appears.

Is heaven for ever shut?  
 Go not its dwellers out?  
 Yes! for at times the Lamb of Love is seen,  
 With angels in His train,  
 Approach the home of pain,  
 Redoubling, as He comes, the anguish keen :

But at each advent the heart deems  
 Less stern, more beautiful, His blessèd presence seems.

Did Lethe's lovely star,\*  
 Shimm'ring from afar,  
 Shed light and joy upon old Hades grim?  
 And shall not life's great King  
 Bring gladness on His wing  
 At last, to those who once rejected Him?  
 I know not : 'tis a pleasing dream,  
 Upon an ocean dark a passing autumn gleam.

My reverie is o'er,  
 I see the scene no more,  
 The night with all her stars hath passed away ;  
 The morn again is up,  
 Presenting her red cup,  
 The budding promise of a glorious day :  
 Yet, ere I close my solemn minstrelsy,  
 To men, I cry, "Beware! *the Night of Nights draws nigh.*"

\* This beautiful expression, "The star of Lethe," is applied by Keats to the god Mercury periodically visiting the Shades.

BOOK SEVENTH.

THE POETS OF NIGHT.

ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

NIGHT itself a Poem—Poets of Night—Homer—Eschylus—Lucretius—  
Dante—Shakspeare—Ossian—Massacre of Glencoe—Milton—Addison  
—Young—Byron—Wordsworth—Shelley.

## BOOK SEVENTH.

### THE POETS OF NIGHT.

AN Everlasting Poem is the Night,  
Gleaming incessant on the page of space :  
Printing itself in letters all of gold :  
Singing itself in measures, all of fire ;  
With all poetic forms combined in one ;  
An epic telling of God's glorious deeds ;  
A hymn, resounding to His endless praise ;  
A drama, surging with His varied will ;  
A tragedy of death, and " psalm of life ;"  
A deep didactic poem, like God's law  
Proclaiming truth in thunder and in flame ;  
A great unrhymed romance of loveliness ;  
And a sealed, half-shut prophecy of good,  
Destined to open to the coming years,  
As their slow, solemn fingers pass it o'er,

But Night, the poem, has its poets too :  
 Dark swans, with sweeter notes than nightingales'  
 Hymning the glories of its sable throne.

First, Homer, ancient and divinest bard.  
 "The sun of Homer shines upon us still :"\*  
 And yet more sweetly shines his heavenly moon †  
 O'er Ida's top, gleaming on arms, like grain  
 In autumn fields, and smiling on the hills  
 Which rise to meet her, ev'n as children's heads  
 Lift up themselves half-way, to meet the kiss  
 From mother's lips, soft murmuring as it falls ;  
 Touching the trees, which curl and nod in joy,  
 As though the stillness of the dewy touch  
 Were wind from heav'n ; and like a torch wav'd slow  
 Before a mighty forest opening,  
 The measureless ‡ abyss of space above.  
 Like trees with trunks of light and leaves of fire.  
 Oh! beautiful thy moonlight shineth still,  
 Through the waste darkness of three thousand years,  
 Homer ! And still thy noble pilgrim sire,  
 Ulysses, seated in his lone canoe, §  
 Beholds, with sleepless eye, the Pleiades,  
 Boötes slow to set, Orion huge,

\* "Sun of Homer." Schiller.

† "Moon." Iliad, Book viii.

‡ Homer says, "The immeasurable ether is disclosed."

§ Odyssey, Book v.

The Wain,\* as restless as the wanderer,  
 Alone ne'er dipping in the ocean baths,  
 And on the left for ever guiding him.  
 Thy heavens are high, not deep; their splendour  
     fresh,  
 As if each star were new from God's own touch—  
 Burnished in beauty—meaning in them none;  
 An alphabet of glory uncombined;  
 Stray sounds of music wandering in search  
 Of some grand master-tone to bind them all!

Prometheus on his rock beneath the stars!  
 What poetry has Eschylus expressed  
 In that one dream—the dream of agony  
 Divine, of courage quenchless, calm disdain—  
 Submission to the gods, with bend as proud  
 As that of aged pine before a blast,  
 New-born and dying in one noisy hour;  
 Or that of Madderhorn before the clouds,  
 Which chafe, but scar not, his immortal brow!  
 His soul, the rock, the vulture, and the stars—  
 Eternal all these elements as vast;  
 His soul, a symbol of man's glorious mind,  
 Sublimely struggling with his mortal doom;  
 The rock, the power of circumstance and chance;  
 The vulture, destiny, embittered fate,

\* "The Wain." The Great Bear.

Plunging his beak, like plough-share, into man ;  
The stars, the sympathizing witnesses,  
Smiling far love and pity on his woes,  
Through million pores and windows of the sky :  
Preparing, too, to greet him, when his strife  
Is over, and his free soul bounds away  
To meet his kindred, and with joy to seek  
The painless, peaceful city of his God.

The scene is Athens now, the hill of Mars.  
Beneath the gleaming midnight sits a knight—  
A Roman, poet, in heaven's wrath equipped  
With gifts which glorify and curse his soul :  
Madness must perch upon that lofty brow :  
And even now it hovers 'bove his head,  
Like vulture slowly circling o'er his prey ;  
That sound he hears not, for his soul is rapt  
In mystic musings on these mighty worlds,  
And in his ear there ring far other sounds,  
Compounded of the roar of cataracts,  
The howl of winds, and tramp of armed men.  
It is the storm of atoms dancing down  
Through the abyss to form the universe ;  
To meet and mingle, kindling into stars,  
All led by blind fate, and by blinder chance.  
LUCRETIUS, in deep rapture, lists the sound,  
Till it has ceased, and then he lifts his head



Proud as the cliff of Corinth, and beholds  
 A temple with no god : ten thousand eyes  
 Moving and sparkling, with no soul behind ;  
 Swords of keen flame, and turning every way,  
 No hand to wield them, and no foe to smite ;  
 A wilderness of burning, glitt'ring death ;  
 Nature cut off from God, ev'n as a rose  
 Snapped by the wind deserts the parent tree  
 And lies an orphan on the bleak, cold ground ;  
 Then to his feet upsprings the Fatherless,  
 Waving his arms, and shouting in his joy,  
 " The God is gone—the godlike still remains ;  
 Thy works, great Jove, have swallowed up thyself,  
 Inverting Saturn's dark old massacre.\*  
 Thy fear is gone, thy thunder throne, thy hell,  
 With all its penal flames and lasting woes,  
 Have vanished, leaving nothing in their room  
 But mystery and glory—harmless fires !  
 Unscorching as the moonbeam on the vine.  
 The old rough shore has fled : the sea is here,  
 In which the swimmer fearlessly may plunge,  
 Steering his spirit sternly through the gulf  
 That must support his manly, onward strokes,  
 'Till the hour comes when spent, like wave in  
     wave,  
 He sinks, and feels the arms of nothingness—

\* Saturn devouring his own children.

His womb and grave, his mother and his bride,  
 Clasp him for ever in a chill embrace.  
 I ask no more, great universe, from thee,  
 No more I hope, no more *can* I receive !”  
 He spake, and a strange glory, like a smile  
 Reflected from a twilight Alp of snow,  
 Made his face gleam amid the starry night,  
 And round his head a lunar rainbow seemed  
 To weave a mock crown 'mid his long locks there.  
 Swift years sweep past, and lo ! on Tiber's banks,  
 As sets the sun, I see the Fatherless  
 Op'ning a vein in his arm,\* and with mad eye  
 Watching his life's blood as it ebbs away,  
 And lets his soul, a meteor, out in night,  
 To wander ghastly and forlorn through space.

Dante ! an old medallion of thee stands  
 Before me, over which the smoke has passed,  
 And grimed it to the likeness of a fiend.  
 Small need of such transformance upon thee,  
 Spirit of lonely woe and silent scorn,  
 From whom, as with the poetry of hell  
 Came songs, not shrieks, from lips that torture op'd,  
 And forced to music sad, and spare, and slow,  
 Yet beautiful as lute in madhouse touched,

\* Lucretius is said to have committed suicide thus, when only a few years over forty.

By hands whose cunning is not yet forgot,  
Which strike and pause, and strike and pause again !  
Thy brow a dark and bending battlement,  
Still with excess of sorrow, calmed by wrath,  
Eagle thy beak, thy nostril curved with scorn,  
A tiger jaw the basement of the whole.  
It is a frown, not face, a fadeless frown,  
The frown of a dethroned and desperate god !  
A deep of woe thine eye, but how these lips  
Seem shutting in, with effort dire and strong,  
A deeper depth, an inner main where thoughts  
Like monsters swim and circle, fight and breed  
In dumb damnation all, ne'er to receive  
The gift of utterance, breathe the air of earth !  
No hope has he, no pleasure, and no fear,  
Passion has fled, pride and defiance still  
Maintain their empire, scorning even themselves  
And him whose heart they fester and consume.  
Worship is torture, and belief not fear,  
Because he cannot tremble, though the fiends  
With aspen homage shake the air of hell !\*  
And yet at times doth a sweet memory pass,  
Like winter sunshine o'er a sombre sea.  
It is the memory of early love,  
It is the thought of Beatrice the lost,  
The lovely, whom his soul has sought in vain,

\* "The devils believe and tremble."

Through hell, and found at last in vain in heaven.  
In vain ! for even there his soundless woe  
Went with him ; and when Beatrice a crown  
Put on his throbbing temples, they no balm  
Received, but shuddered strongly at the touch  
As though the circlet red of hell's dark king  
Were wreathed around his hot and shrinking brain.  
Still, though he loves the stern and terrible,  
The beautiful doth love and follow him,  
As a mild spirit might a wretched man.  
And not a book in all the flowery realms  
Of poesy so full of graceful forms,  
Touches of landscape painting coming in  
Like gleams of autumn sunshine through the clouds,  
Heart-rending pathos, gentleness, and love,  
Soft scenes of life and tender memories,  
Yet all unable to relieve his woe,  
Or cheer that night of sombre, hopeless thought,  
Which go where'er he might was with him still,  
Aye, with him in the very heaven of heavens—  
No night in heaven 'till Dante entered it !  
But his chief night was noon, when glory lay  
On Italy's soft sky and landscape sweet,  
With mountains blue basking in sunny light,  
With lulled vines dreaming of the golden age,  
With lovesick waves scarce creeping in the calm,  
Into a faint sweet lisp their music sunk,

No cloud or cloudlet on the azure sky,  
All things subdued in slumb'ring, speechless joy.  
Then ! how that glory on his naked soul  
Falls like those flakes of fire, which once he saw  
Slow wafted from a coal black firmament  
On that bare sand and those nude giants old !\*  
Nor with her cool and fresh'ning breath does night,  
Her Jupiter or Venus, soothe his soul.  
His proud eye seeks for Saturn, and with him  
Stern and mysterious communion holds  
Like that of two eyed flames across the trough,  
'Tween mountain billows in the lake of fire.  
Who can express thy desolate estate,  
Exile whose home is hell, the stirrer up  
Of all its furnaces to whelm thy foes,  
Sublimest, saddest of the sons of men,  
Sad as one dweller in one planet world,  
Sad as a last star left upon the vine  
Of heaven when all its clusters are consumed,  
And it and Darkness are alone for ever !

From Dante's night to Shakspeare's what a bound !  
With darkness Dante rides, like him of old  
Who ruined Eden—Shakspeare with the light,  
*He* moves through midnight like a horse o' the sun,  
Dropt from the team, all gamboling with joy,

\* See "Inferno," Book 7th.

And flinging splendour round him as he runs !  
The night of Shakspeare is a southern night,  
With tipsy stars for candles burning out,  
With elves and fairies footing it to song,  
With Pucks and Ariels flashing through the shade,  
With lovers sitting on the moonlight banks,  
Exchanging fancies when their kisses pause,  
With glowworms burning gaily 'mid their woods,  
With thrilling song of nightingale and lute,  
By distance softened till it seems the shade  
Of sound, and gentle as an infant's sigh ;  
And yet around that bright enchanted land  
Of dream and Faery, luxury and love  
Weird sounds are heard upon the edge, the howl  
Of rav'ning wolf, the bark of houseless dog,  
The eery gibber of the lonely ghost,  
And "withered murder's" long and stealthy stride.  
The rustle of the demon wings which pass  
From couch to couch, and sow their "wicked dreams,"  
And from the caves which open upon hell,  
The dance of witches and the cauldron's hiss,  
And from the forests and the lonely hills  
Lamentings loud, and shrieks of death, and hoots  
From owls obscure, and dark wings of the bat  
Wheeling against the relics of the day ;  
But even as sounds the dreariest without  
Increase the joy of marriage guests within,

And sweeter than the harp the wild wind seems,  
And the sharp rain upon the window glass  
Runs thrilling through all hearts like minstrelsy.  
So Shakspeare's sadness is in league with joy,  
His discords deepen music, and his fears  
Come wed with white-armed hopes and harmonies.  
Oh! world of Shakspeare, for a world thou art—  
How large, how rich, how gladsome, how serene!  
Thy season spring, thy sward for ever fair,  
With daisies, buttercups, and fresh green grass.  
Blue as a bridal curtain is thy sky,  
Thy breezes roses fan, thy stars are smiles,  
From some unfathomed and far face of joy.  
Thy dunghills bloom with flowers, and even thy graves  
Heave like the wombs of glory to be born,  
And round the whole a firmament expands  
Of light refulgent, and of love supreme;  
And thus is Shakspeare's world a soft strong link,  
Like some serene and isthmus seeming star,  
Binding us to the galaxies of God.

From Avon backward to the north we fly,  
And see blind Ossian sitting 'neath the moon,  
His hair a snowy storm, his solemn eye  
A star eclipsed, yet burning through its veil;  
Unbent his stature, and his cheek a rose,  
Blooming beneath a glacier's icy shade,

Glencoe's dark hills above him sternly piled,  
Here running into ridgy walls of rock,  
There shooting up in naked, lonely peaks,  
Where eagles build, and storms essay to pause,  
But cannot for their weary feet find rest,  
Scourged ever onward by a viewless wrath ;  
And where the clouds disport their misty wings,  
And weave their crowns of vapour, or of fire,  
With colours cold as lead, or warm as gold.  
Now breaking into those prodigious shapes,  
Those three wild mountains, the Weird Sisters named,  
Colossal company of Gorgon heads,  
Shedding strange night and fear upon the veil ;  
And yonder, bending in one awful frown  
Of dark and beetling rock upon a lake,  
Which in enchanted terror sleeps below,  
Its dream the "Black Crag of Glencoe" for ever !  
While through the whole a melancholy voice  
As of a spirit, bound in watery chains,  
Goes onward night and day in endless wail,  
Recalling now some past of agony,  
Prophetic now of direr coming woe.  
It is the cry of Cona, lonely stream !  
And with that cry are blended kindred sounds :  
Winds stirring the wild myrtle and the heath,  
Craggs toppling down, and falling at the foot  
Of the blind bard, who hears besides the notes



Of foxes' howl, scream of awakened bird,  
Snow sliding off some wall-like precipice,  
And voice of spirits passing through the night,  
On moonbeams riding, or on lightning forks  
Transfixed and writhing in their hopeless doom.  
And he, too, mingle must in song with these,  
The lonely burden of a broken heart,  
With memories of heroes dead, of bards  
Long silent in the dust of battles fought,  
Of kindred lost, till now he sits apart  
Beneath that blasted pine, and ghosts themselves  
Are heard, but seen no more by Ossian's eyes.  
Mournful Malvina still beside him stands,  
Yet sweet and strong his strain, and deep the harp  
Thrills through the valley, hushing other sounds,  
Or drawing them around it into one ;  
And Fingal's son is monarch of the glen,  
Ruling it by the sceptre of a song ;  
While lonely shepherds hear the far-off notes,  
And Cona murmurs out a sullen joy,  
And eagles starting from the midnight cliffs,  
Wheel circles of applause round that white head,  
And Fingal's shadow, like some mighty cloud,  
Wind-raised and wind-resisting, 'bove him floats,  
Brooding in pride and gladness o'er his son ;  
And Fillan's\* well-loved ghost like south-west breeze,

\* Fillan, the youngest brother of Ossian. See Temora.

Of balmy breath crosses old Ossian's brow,  
And whispers, "My heart's brother, come away ;  
We weary for thee in the land of souls."  
"I come," the mighty poet cries, "but first,  
Malvina, I must sing one other song—  
A prophecy of fate. This glen shall list,  
And all its torrents and its moon-lit cliffs,  
And snows eternal, and ye dreary shades  
Which fan the eyries with your soft slow wings,  
Ye, too, shall pause and tremble as you hear  
Of that which presses on my burdened eye,  
A ghastly vision which can pass away  
Not till the touch of thy cold finger, Death !  
A thousand years have dropt into the dark,  
Like Ballahulish\* leaves into its lake,  
When autumn winds have riv'n them in their wrath.  
Strange kings have come, and Morven's race no  
more

Bend in proud joy before a Stewart's throne ;  
Winter has wound his shroud about the glen  
And turned the mountains into tall white ghosts,  
Like monumental mock'ries of the dead,  
And clutched the streams in his frost-fretted hand,  
And choked the voice of Cona gurgling now,  
As from some darksome and earth-buried cave,  
But struggling still in syllables of woe,

\* "Ballahulish." A lovely wooded hill and district near Glencoe.

To gasp out tidings which it cannot scream  
Of fire and vengeance, treachery and death.  
Unheard its low soliloquy of doom,  
For loud in all the clust'ring cottages  
Where the brave sept of the MacDonalDs dwell  
Rise sounds of melody and voice of mirth.  
The measured madness of the dance is there,  
And the wild rapture of the feast of shells ;  
Warm hands are clasped in hands that burn reply,  
And friendship glows and brightens into love.  
A stranger troop is quartered in the glen,  
Smiles on their faces, murder in their hearts—  
From sweet Strathfillan have these Campbells come,  
With charge to wend not back their homeward way  
Till they have drenched the glen in gore, and wrapt  
Its homes in one wide wave of blasting fire.  
The night wears on, the mirth subsides, and now  
In slumber deep the hamlet all is hush'd ;  
The children sleep, and moan amidst their dreams ;  
The patriarch sleeps, and sees green summer fling\*  
Her mantle o'er the howling wilderness ;  
The dogs half sealed in troubled slumber lie,  
Loch Linnhé sleeps beneath the sleeping stars,  
The mountains sleep, save when some voice of woe  
From wakeful bird or lonely wand'ring ghost

\* "Green summer." To dream of green is, in the Highlands, and Scotland generally, always thought unlucky. See the "Dowie Holms of Yarrow."

Creeps like a coronach across the waste.  
But the red eye of murder cannot sleep ;  
Revenge has tossed his coverlet aside,  
And snatched with eager hand his angry dirk,  
The guard are strengthened, sentinels increased,  
Gloomy Glenlyon and his men are up,  
And armed and out amid the falling snow,  
Burning like bloodhounds for the appointed time—  
When, lo ! two plaided forms rush wildly in  
All pale and panting in their haste and fear,  
(MacIan's sons, who heard the soldiers say,  
“ Oh ! what a base and bloody task is this ! ”)  
And crying, “ Why, Glenlyon, thus in arms  
Long ere one gleam of dawn has touched the sky ;  
What mean ye, men, and whither are ye bound ;  
Is't peace or war, we charge you answer us ! ”  
“ Peace, surely, with our kind hosts of Glencoe,  
But to Glengarry on a raid we're bound,  
And there we'll make the rafters smoke, and back  
Bring with us store of spoil for you to share ;  
Away to bed, and sleep while we shall march  
To burst with morning on the astonished foe ! ”  
Murm'ring, the youths return, and now once more  
Silence and sleep sink down upon the glen,  
When, hark ! a knock comes to the patriarch's door,  
And hastily to answer it he springs.  
But first the quaigh he fills, and with it hies

To give the stranger-guest his morning draught.  
The door is opened—mark the twain ! the one  
Greyhaired, shirt mantled, friendship in his eye,  
A cup of welcome trembling in his hand.  
The other grasps a dirk, and throws a frown  
Scarce seen, for ere its shadow falls, a blow  
Comes crashing on the old man's neck, and down  
In death he sinks, blood mingling with the draught ;  
His head's a step, and in Glenlyon leaps  
Followed by yelling, cursing, raving fiends  
Who seize the matron, tear the golden rings  
With wolfish teeth from her thin quaking hands,  
And strike and trample her until she dies ;  
Then slake their fury on the household all,  
All save a shepherd old and sennachie,  
Awake all night with melancholy thoughts,  
He hears the tumult, dashes through the door,  
Dirks striking at his shadow, hands his plaid  
Seeking to seize ; but bursting through the throng  
He gains the hut where the two brothers lie,  
And shouts, like scream of Benshie through the  
    night,  
“ Sleep ye, MacDonalds, while your aged sire  
Lies murdered on his hearth ? arise and flee !  
Myself your guide through the deep wilderness.”  
They rise, they run, they hurry up the glen,  
Snow-shrouded, till they seem white gliding ghosts ;

Silent their steps, as snow falling on snow,  
Pausing at times, since unpursued—they turn,  
And what a sight at last meets their grieved eyes,  
When at the point where I, the seer, now stand,  
The iced lake under the black rock above,  
The hamlet of their fathers is in flames !  
And through that fire and surging smoke are heard  
Shrieks, oaths, and curses, weepings wild and loud,  
Shots, shouts, and groans—a harmony of death !  
Each sound, distinct and clear, as though the air,  
The glen, the mountains, and the mountain winds  
Were hushed, to hear and to hand on the whole  
To the great audit of the Judgment Day !  
Then, nearer voices break upon their ear,  
And naked figures struggle up the gloom,  
Pursued by kilted demons, armed with fire ;  
Some sink in weakness 'mid the heavy snows,  
Some turn and breathe deep curses ere they die,  
Some gain the rock, and join the dauntless three,  
Who now resume their flight and reach the cliffs,  
The multitudinous and lonely heights,  
Where peace and nature, God and freedom dwell.  
But what a glen they leave of fire and snow,  
And blood commingled in one ghastly mass ;  
Here children cling and clasp the soldiers' knees,  
And perish, praying o'er the brutal dirk.  
There men are torn half-naked from their beds,

And shot at their own door. From house to house  
The ruffians pass, with oaths and curses deep,  
Sparing nor age nor wailing infancy,  
Till in that valley not a single house  
But has a burnt or burning corpse within.  
Morn, wan and weary, rises on the glen,  
Hiding her eyelids with a veil of snow,  
So that she cannot see the smoking roofs,  
The crackling corpses, and the frozen blood,  
O'er which the Campbells stalk with furious strides,  
Peering about for the last spark of life,  
That they with armèd heel may tread it out.  
"Here's more work still for us," a soldier cries,  
Spying an old man 'neath a heap of drift,  
Whose worm-like writhings prove him still alive.  
One stab, one groan, and the tremendous deed  
Of massacre is done, at which the heath  
Which waves o'er all the Highland hills shall blush,  
And streams shall wail for ages, ghosts shall shriek,  
Hell tremble through its dayless depths, and heaven  
Weep, and, while weeping, grasp its thunderbolts.  
Beware, Glenlyon's blood, at you they're aimed,  
Beware the curse of God and of Glencoe!" \*

Tears fall upon the lyre in burning showers,

\* "Glenlyon." See the fine ballad in a volume of Poems by B. Symmons, (Blackwood, 1842,) entitled "The Curse of Glencoe."

A rainbow of red wrath 'mid pity's drops—  
The poet's head droops low, the harp begins  
Slowly to quit his grasp, his fingers move  
In air, then prostrate on the ground he falls,  
Like some white oak of ages, tempest-hurled  
From his old cliff; or like a cataract,  
Leaping from off his rock to glorious death,  
Thus Ossian dies, and never since has harp  
Like his resounded in a Highland vale,  
Or waked the echoes of a Highland hill.  
The Cona murmurs on, but Ossian's voice  
Is mute, and though the sun still rolls above,  
And with his awful beauty crowns each morn,  
Careless of morning's\* voice his poet sleeps;  
And long since all the ghosts of Morven's night  
Have vanished from the mountains and the caves,  
And walk the heath and ride the blast no more.

Milton! his night was evening while at home,  
In happy boyhood, and in studious youth,  
Diluted day, in which the stars appeared  
Young as his genius, trembling as his love,  
While o'er the meadows and the woodlands dim  
Glowworms shone out at call of nightingales,  
Creating an earth-heaven of light and song,  
And visions such as "youthful poets dream,"

\* "Careless of morning." See Ossian's "Address to the Sun."



In "airy stream" swept past ; and over all  
The moon arising climbed the brow of heaven,  
And poured a meek and pensive, bashful noon,  
Like virgin pale with wonder at the power  
Of her own melting and inspiring charms,  
On Milton's manhood did Italian night  
Dawn upon Fesolé ? and through thy tube,  
O starry Galileo, lord of heaven,  
While Urban \* ruled o'er this "dim spot called earth ?"  
No ! for ere then a dungeon held the sage,  
And in its darkened light the immortals met—  
The one a youthful Abdiel, fresh in bloom,  
Hope shining on his white, unwrinkled brow,  
The joy of genius sparkling in his eye,  
Love curling in the tendrils of his hair,  
And manly courage binding in his lips,  
A living "sunshine in that shady place !"  
The other, small of stature, pale of cheek,  
A thousand furrows, like the paths of stars  
Wrinkling his brow, o'er which some thin white hairs  
Fall straggling down with weary, aimless droop,  
His piercing eyes just setting in the night  
(Ah ! Milton, 'tis a dark astrology,  
Foreshadowing thy fate !) of blindness deep,  
A quenchless smile upon his withered lips,

\* "Urban." Urban the 8th, the Pope of the time, once a friend, ultimately a bitter persecutor of Galileo.

Like light zodiacal from sinking sun,  
 Or like a kiss left on his lips by truth,  
 Who dearly loved and fondled her great child ;  
 Or like the smile of everlasting fame,  
 Rising upon him through the mist of years,  
 A smile which seems to hieroglyph the words,  
 “ *E pur si muove*, Onward still it moves !  
 And ye, ye dotards, hypocrites, and slaves,  
 Are moving with it—moving to your doom,  
 And that of all your blind and bigot creeds !”  
 With what comparison shall we compare  
 The meeting of the matchless sage and bard ?  
 Transit of Mercury across the sun—  
 Young Mercury across his father’s brow ?  
 Say, rather, transit of that comet vast,  
 Which erst in autumn pierced our British skies  
 (In shape a sabre, crooked, with basket hilt,  
 And crossed Arcturus, spectacle sublime ! \*  
 Which no gyration of the dancing heavens  
 Shall e’er in grandeur or in grace surpass.  
 Oh ! strange to see the wanderer advance,  
 Fearless in courage, radiant with hope,  
 Toward that ancient and serenest star,  
 As if to look into the eye of God,  
 To mark the moment when the mighty lights  
 Are one, and when a whisper seems to pass

\* In 1858.

Through the hushed silence of the autumn eve,  
And through the bending, list'ning orbs of night,  
And through the thousands of admiring men,  
And say, "Thus man and God shall meet at last,  
But meet to marry in eternal bands."  
And when the regal interview is o'er,  
To see the parting of the lustrous twain,  
*This* to rush on through endless gulfs of space,  
Forcing a fiery home where'er he goes,  
Returning yet in same dim awful round ;  
*That* to remain in solitary state,  
A king of glory on his norland throne—  
While one deep sigh, heaved from a million hearts,  
Says (as the Moslems murmur) "God is great!"  
Thus met the two at Florence, soon to part ;  
The one to England bound, to fight the cause  
Of freedom—not with sword, but with a pen,  
Clear, bright, and piercing as Damascus' blade.  
The other to remain in darkness pent,  
Till to his eye the telescope of death  
His Lord applied, and lo ! not night but day !

Let us o'erpass some years of lab'ring life,  
Of toil and suffering, and ambition high,  
And see the bard and scholar in his age :  
Alone he sits, but not like Dante, who  
Ne'er knew a mate, ne'er met an equal soul,

(Save one bright virgin, who embraced and fled !)  
But like the last mast of some lordly bark—  
The rest all reft and sunk into the deep—  
Struggling alone between the spray and sky,  
Or like lorn cedar of the Lebanon,  
Mourning for his tall kindred cut away,  
Though for a noble destiny to be  
Made pillars in the temple of their God !  
Where now a sorrow in a human heart,  
Like that inspired by Bradshaw's, Cromwell's loss ?  
And where a heart that could contain such grief ?  
Bradshaw—the keen, severe, and solemn axe,  
Which smote the sacrifice for England's weal ;  
Cromwell, the mighty hand upheld by heaven  
(Like that of Abram on the Syrian mount),  
To which the cry came, " Strike, and strike again !  
And flash the bloody, blazing steel before  
The eyes of men, of angels, and of God ;  
And let the echo of that judgment blow  
Resound in Milton's music through the world !"  
Aye ! what a height man's justice climbèd then,  
When Charles, the subtle " man of blood," expired.  
And what a depth it left in the great soul,  
Which mourns in secret o'er the memory,  
Yet rolls in gladness England's deed divine !  
Alone and blind like Ossian, but no breeze  
From Morven's heathy mountains bathes his brow ;

No kindred spirits hold communion high  
With him, the Hebrew bard, born out of time ;  
He sits a being, whom no ghost dare near,  
Because another, and a holier Ghost,  
His heart hath filled with love, his soul with fire,  
Even HE, who brooded o'er the chaos old,  
And slowly shaped a world to voice of song.  
No vision dare approach him, for his mind  
Is wrapt in one stupendous, solid dream,  
Let down, like Jacob's ladder, from above ;  
A dream of Pandemonium, piled in night,  
Beautiful palace of eternal fire !  
Of Satan, Atlas, Hercules, of Hell,  
Sultan supreme upon a burning throne,  
With scars of thunder garlanding his brow,  
Strong swimmer through the nethermost abyss—  
Rising a blasted, yet a burning sun  
On the new world to wrap it in his flames ;  
Apostle of damnation, hov'ring high  
Above Niphates' mount, ere yet he stoops  
Upon fair Eden, blooming far below.  
See him, a devil, " standing in the sun,"  
And hear his stern soliloquy, in words  
Which rise like smoke between him and the day,  
And stain his cherub-mask with foulest gloom ;  
Watched, though he knows it not, by angelic eyes.  
See him returning from a ruined earth,

Pursued by a sad glory, like that star,  
Called Wormwood, plunging down into th' abyss ;  
See him exalted on his torrid seat,  
And hear the angry curses of the fiends  
For whom he sowed the wind—the whirlwind reaped ;  
And see him in his dragon shape the same,  
Unquelled, unchanged, unterrified, unbent,  
Before Jehovah's will, and darting up,  
Even while he grovels in the slush of hell,  
An eye as fierce as the fierce levin bolts ;  
While o'er his brow, narrowed intense in hate,  
There rises red a comb of bristling fire !  
Oh ! Milton, with such vision in thy soul,  
Possessed of hell's great prince, how could'st thou  
    choose  
But sit alone, and silent, dim, and sad,  
Like mountain thunder pressed all night, 'till morn  
Chases the grisly incubus away ?

Yet visions, too, of beauty cheered thy soul,  
Through thy soothed heart the streams of Eden  
    ran ;  
Circled the moon of unfall'n earth in view ;  
The thornless roses rustled in thine ear ;  
The harmless lion crouched before thy feet ;  
Raphael shook o'er thee his fragrant wings ;  
Eve leant above thee, like thy sainted spouse,

Kissing away the sorrow in thine eyes ;\*  
Adam's deep voice was near, and angels' song  
Rose, swelled, and sunk upon the breeze of night,  
Blending at times with a diviner tone  
The still small whisper of the voice of God.

And now in death behold the poet lie :  
It is a winter and a Sabbath eve ;  
November sun 'mid misty glory shines,  
Struggling to see once more that noble head  
Soon to go down amid the waves of death.  
Mute is the chamber where th' unconquered soul  
Prepares to plunge into the dim unknown ;  
The words are whispers, and the steps are dumb ;  
A gentle smile rests on the poet's lips,  
Eager his ear, and bent above his eye,  
When, lo ! a sunbeam shoots across the bed—  
It is Uriel's chariot come for him !  
And, hark ! the music of an angel's voice,  
Heard only by that earnest, dying ear,  
Its burden, " Brother Spirit, come away."  
And at the moment when the day goes down,  
Milton expires in silence and alone,  
And two suns in one instant leave the world !

With modest look, and steps of trembling love,  
See Addison beneath the twilight stars,

\* See his 23rd Sonnet.

Which swarm like golden bees throughout the sky,  
 Hov'ring above thy banks, thou monarch Thames !  
 What time the city's hum and thine are met,  
 Mellowed to music in the autumn eve.  
 Timid he seems, and yet no terror glares  
 Upon him from the must'ring hosts of night ;  
 No thought of gloom stands 'tween him and the stars ;  
 He, like that wondrous child, sees in these orbs  
 " Loopholes of heaven to let the glory through."  
 It is the wealth of beauty weighs him down,  
 Like lover prostrate 'neath his maiden's brow,  
 Or devotee consumed in Mary's smile.  
 Soft are the eyes which look adown the deep,  
 And sweet the whispers falling on his ear :  
 " Islands of bliss are we, sailing the sky  
 On wings of praise and rapture—over earth  
 We pass in love, and gaze in hope, and seek  
 To waft down happiness into its air,  
 Sleepless in song our voices unto God,  
 Hymning His name, His fame, His great intents.  
 We are the morning stars that once sang sweet,  
 When earth and man in melody arose,  
 And sing for ever still with deeper notes  
 In concert with the shouting sons of God."  
 Speechless the meek "Spectator" hears the strains,  
 And while the sunbeams of the day of rest \*

\* "Day of rest." The "Saturday Spectators," which Burke had read to him on his death-bed.



Are drawing near, returns them through the land  
 In low and lovely echoes, ling'ring still  
 In human ears, and making death-beds sweet.

Through night, more daring, see the ardent Young  
 Pursuing his wild, solitary flight,  
 With fiery wing skirring its fiery orbs,  
 And dark'ning midnight by his darker thoughts ;  
 Sublime his purpose, and his flight is far,  
 Yet checked at times, as though an eagle felt  
 Some cord of base compulsion drag him down,  
 Aye, from his airiest and proudest wheel,  
 And fix him in the ivy with the owl,  
 Or chain him to the lowest dunghill's dust ;  
 And yet again, behold him soar away  
 From "Pitt" and "Portsmouth," "Onslow," "Wil-  
 mington,"

And all the fulsome patrons of the hour,\*  
 Through suns and systems, and star labyrinths,  
 Perplexed in glory, burning, winding up  
 Ev'n to the margin of th' eternal throne !  
 All heav'n to himself, in his low age, has Young  
 None second, and none near him as he soars ;  
 Imagination in that day is dead,  
 And cold beside it lies the corpse of faith.  
 While in his Welwyn chamber sits the bard—

\* See the miserable dedications, &c., in the "Night Thoughts."

One lamp, it seems a spirit, near him set,  
Placed in the centre of a ghastly skull,  
And eyeing eagerly the poet's face,  
Which gleams and glows, and pales and glows again,  
As his strong fancy wings the starry deep ;  
And when the climax of the song is reached,  
And, standing on the pinnacle intense,  
The rapt one cries,\* ' O, who can satiate sight  
In such a scene, in such an ocean wide  
Of deep astonishment ? where depth, height, breadth,  
Are lost in their extremes, and where to count  
The thick-sown glories in that field of fire,  
Perhaps the seraphs' computation fails ; ”  
The spirit living in that lonely light  
Smiles out well pleased, and darts a tongue of flame,  
Which sheds new glory on the inspired eye,  
As though a torch flash'd on an angel's brow !  
While from above the starry host of heaven  
Seem all to sparkle with a fresher glow,  
Like looks of men whom speech or song enthral,  
And own the magic of their laureate's strain.  
Joy there may be in heaven, and in thee,  
Thou silent midnight lamp, companion true  
To that high-souled and solitary man ;  
But when the rapture of the flight is o'er,  
Small joy in him ; he to a widowed couch

\* " Rapt one cries." See book ninth of the " Night Thoughts."

Retires, to sleep not, or in dreary dreams  
To live the sorrows, and, far worse, the joys  
Of his past life again ; and when he wakes  
The sunshine smites his spirit like a scourge,  
And hopeless thoughts and madd'ning memories  
Make his day hideous ; doubly dear the night  
Which wraps him up among his stars again !

The night of Byron ! come, ye Horrors dread,  
From all your lurid and unfathomed caves ;  
Whether ye slumber by the cataract,  
Hearing its roar of agony in dream,  
Or rest in shaggy forests, coiled in gloom,  
And clasping the constrictor in your arms,  
Or lurk in mines, feeding on fog and flame,  
Or dwell with monsters in the ocean deep ;  
Come, bow your dark wings over Byron's night,  
And gibber through it like ghosts mad with joy,  
In some short interval to endless pain !  
The night of guilt and gloom, of sin and shame,  
Of genius and of madness massed in one—  
That was the unhappy bard's, through which his soul  
In torture and in triumph rode, as when  
His lightning lorded it\* o'er Alpine hills,  
The wild Tiberius of the midnight storm,  
How fierce and wretched in its reinless power !

\* " Lightning lorded it." See " Childe Harold," Canto third.

The "Byron Energy"\* before us stands,  
With the last echoes of a thunder cloud  
Dying within his ear, and its last light  
Fitfully flashing on his pallid cheek,  
And his eye trav'ling with it o'er the sky ;  
Careless of the calm glories of the stars  
Rising between the fragments of the clouds  
Which noon has torn, and eve not yet has healed,  
His heart is with the thunder rolling north,  
Toward the land which has rejected him,  
And from his livid lips and angry eyes  
He scatters curses on its less'ning wings.  
"Bear on, thou sullen messenger, my wrath,  
The wrath of a heart broken, a head blanched,  
A frame and genius ruined ere their time,  
To my cold fatherland, and tell it there  
In sounds of thunder, syllables of flame—  
And say, though peace and joy and hope are  
fled,  
Hatred, defiance, scorn, are with me still,  
Filling the vials to the very brim—  
My song shall pour like lava o'er the land !"  
How changed from that bold boy at Lochnagar,  
"His cap the bonnet and his cloak the plaid,"  
Leaning as fearlessly upon the ledge  
Of that precipitous and lofty crag,

\* Shelley always called him "the Byronic Energy."

Which looks through snow on yon dim lonely lake,  
As erst "upon Balgounie's brigg's\* black wa',"  
Toying each time with danger's tresses dark,  
Till day has set on Ben MacDhui huge,  
And evening dropt upon the lone Braemar ;  
And high above the northern wave of hills,  
Crested with snow, like foam upon the sea,  
The polar star appears, emblem of fate  
And fame, eternal both ; and his young eye  
Encounters it with pride and presage fond.  
" Like thee to sit supreme, like thee to shine  
In loneliness of power and beauty, rapt  
Within myself, yet swaying other souls  
Ev'n as thou dost attract both earth and heaven ;  
Be mine, be mine in life, or if I die  
Soon, so much sooner shall my glory rise !"  
Then through the glimm'ring shadows of the eve,  
In joy o'er rocks and heath the poet hies  
To the lone cottage underneath the pine,  
And sleeps a sleep starred with the brightest dreams.  
And still at Ballatrech that boyish bed  
Draws "pilgrims of his genius" from all lands,  
Who look and sigh, or weep, and pass away,  
And breathe the wish he had been living still,†  
Or perished on that bed a holy child !

\* "Balgounie's Brigg." See "Don Juan."

† "Living still." Byron, if alive now, would have been seventy-eight, ten years younger than Lord Brougham.

Is that the holy child of Morven's hills,  
 Is that the boy who pressed the heather bed ?  
 Was his the eye which met the polar star  
 In love, and hope, and aspiration high ?  
 That wretched, guilty, widowed, sleepless man,  
 " Standing alone upon his desolate hearth,  
 While all his household gods lie shivered round ;"  
 Or tossing as on couch of burning thorns,  
 Or rising in his wrath, and turning up  
 A red and frenzied eye to Sirius,  
 Who seems in mockery to watch his woes ;  
 Or snatching poison cups to dally with,  
 Then dash them from him in his scornful ire ;  
 Or wetting his once proud poetic page  
 With tears like those which pouting childhood  
     sheds,  
 Blubb'ring out " farewells" over the great gulf  
 Which sin hath dug between him and his bride ;  
 Or gnashing next, his weeping, wailing o'er,  
 His teeth in fury\* against God and man,  
 Till ground their edges are to fiery dust !  
 No one is with him in his agony,  
 None save the steadfast Lover of mankind,  
 Who looks in pity on his proud wild woe.

Once more we see the wand'rer on the deep,

\* " Teeth in fury." Byron in his dreams thus used and injured his teeth.

On *Friday* \* morn the fatal bark has sailed !  
To Greece he goes, to it a star of hope,  
Himself a burning wreck of self-lit woe—  
A beacon dying in the blaze of light  
It sends out kindling into distant lands.  
And he, too, feeleth in his inmost soul  
The life of Greece and his own death entwined.  
At noon behold him on the shaded deck,  
Rise from the banquet with a frantic look, †  
And rush as though a ghost had risen up,  
Like Banquo's, to his sight, with tearful eyes,  
Averted face, and trembling limbs, away ;  
Or see him on the lonely Ithaca,  
Asleep upon a rock, ‡ a cavern's mouth  
Behind, a wild fig-tree above his head ;  
He smiles in sleep—where has his spirit gone ?  
Ah ! it has flown to earlier, better days,  
When his young heart and happiness were one ;  
The murmur of the Dee is in his ear,  
The pines of Ballochbowie cool his brow,  
And all the past till then is blotted out.  
He starts, he wakes ; no Ballatrech is there,  
No mother's form is stooping o'er his head ;  
A dark Italian face is looking on,

\* "Friday." A morning Byron deemed unlucky, and yet he was accidentally led to sail on it to Greece.

† See "Hamilton Browne's Reminiscences," in "Blackwood" for 1834.

‡ See "Moore's Byron."

The shadow is the fig's, and not the fir's  
 To Scotia dear, the sea, and not the stream,  
 Looks up to him with melancholy eye,  
 And what he IS comes back with curdling power ;  
 One curse on the disturber of his dreams,  
 And down he stumbles to the shore again !  
 Or turn and see him skirt old Vulcan's isles,\*  
 Those shrines of fire set in the crystal sea,  
 And tell with shudder how a sailor once,  
 While ploughing past the sullen Stromboli,  
*Beheld a man he knew, borne by two fiends,*  
*And plunged into its crater raging high.*  
 But now no flame or fiend is there—'tis quenched,  
 Emblem of the great spirit near his close ;  
 And though he watches all night long, no spark  
 Will shine on him, his fiery kin are cold.

A fevered life ensures a fevered death,  
 And scorching is the mist round Byron's brow ;  
 And though eve seemeth to receive his soul,  
 Yet, like the morning star, he sets in flame !  
 Who would not weep the poet's wasted life,  
 His genius winding round him like those snakes  
 Which once crushed Laocoon in their ire ;  
 His passions feeding on him like the worms

\* "Vulcan's Isles." The Lipari Islands. See "Hamilton Brown's Reminiscences," in "Blackwood" for 1834.



Upon a corpse, their parent and their prey ;  
 His early aim long buried ere he died,  
 Like river suicidal lost in sand ;  
 His works of broken and contorted power,  
 Like ragged glory in a summer eve,  
 All pomp, and strength, and lustre, but no plan,  
 No calm consummate finish, no repose,\*  
 His sins and sorrows huddled into one,  
 Like yew-trees and their shadows in the night ;  
 His end just at the moment when his soul  
 Was least yet most itself, bent on a work  
 Worthy of heroes old, or demigods ;  
 His fate alone in a far foreign land,  
 Wild soldiers† raging round, and no friend near  
 Of kindred heart to close his burning eyes,  
 With death's deep, dewy, everlasting veil !  
 Yet, Byron, in thy tomb we hail thee king,  
 Potential king of Greece and British song,  
 Still the poetic shepherd, on the top  
 Of old Olympus, with his strange sweet pipe,  
 Flöera,‡ made of bone from eagle's wing,  
 Resounds thy name throughout the solitude ;  
 And still the Grecian, gazing on thy bust,  
 Found in each town and village of the land,

\* "No repose." Except in "Don Juan."

† "Wild soldiers." See "Moore's Byron."

‡ "Flöera." See Urquhart's "Spirit of the East," vol. i.

Cries, "Stranger, 'tis our monarch's brow you see,  
He should have been our sov'reign and our sun."  
And we can answer, "Had the demon power,  
Which was in Harold softened into love,  
Bowling in homage to the Father God,  
He, next to Shakespere, had the ruler been  
Of all the broad and beautiful domain  
Which bears the fruits of England's poesy."

A solemn man beneath the solemn sky,  
Musing on flowers as though each flower a grave,  
Smiling on graves as though each grave a flower,  
He walks o'er earth as o'er a mother's tomb,  
With reverent footstep and with downcast eye ;  
Nor grief, nor rapture great is in his look,  
Nor aught else there can you distinctly see,  
But a quiet question and a filiàl awe,  
Blending together as his whisper asks—  
"What art thou, mighty and mysterious womb,  
From which I came, and whither I return ?  
I know thee not, but my whole heart is thine."  
Earth, and not heaven, was Wordsworth's chosen sphere ;  
The glaring noonday sun rejoiced him not,  
Till in eclipse's shaded day he saw  
Old "Sol" become another, huger earth,  
Black'ning, not burning, in the awe-struck sky.\*

\* See his verses on the eclipse in Italy.

Dear to his heart the gorgeous Milky Way,  
 But dearer far a sweet and lonely star,  
 Resting in love upon Helvellyn's brow,  
 Or crowning Scawfell, king of Cumbria's hills,  
 As evening gently kissed to death the day ;  
 And 'midst night's pomp, and wealthy multitude  
 Of suns and planets, one aye wooed his eye—  
 "The star of Jove, so beautiful and large :"  
 Simple and sov'ran as his own great soul,  
 It seemed his likeness walking in the sky,  
 And 'twas himself he worshipped in the night !  
 Yet sure no self-idolater so great  
 And true in his inverted homage, e'er  
 Looked down on forests or looked up to stars !

Return to memory that lovely night,  
 Some few years sped, when first I saw the tomb  
 Of the great poet of simplicity ;\*  
 Soft fell the twilight of November eve,  
 Early November, ere the leaves had fall'n  
 Upon the silence of sweet Grasmere lake ;  
 Each wave, each pebble, and each mountain  
     high  
 Was emulously still, and not one sound  
 Contended with the holy silence, save

\* In November, 1861, in company with my late lamented friend J. S. Bigg, of Ulverstone, author of "Night and the Soul."

Thy voice, thou constant mourner o'er the dead,  
Rothay, blue darling of the poet's eye !  
A yew sepulchral bending o'er his dust ;  
Long grass unstirred by any breath of breeze,  
Yet laden with a soft and soundless awe—  
There slept the poet-king of Cumberland,  
And of all simple scenes and hearts on earth ;  
And at his feet a little grave proclaimed  
How a poor wayward one\* had stolen near,  
Even as a truant child has often crept  
In darkness and in silence to the feet  
Of an old sleeping sire, and nestled there.  
I plucked a branch of yew, and as I plucked,  
The question, cold, came streaming to my heart, †  
“Shall the great poet ever rise again  
More than this broken branch shall e'er renew  
Its life, and join its parent tree once more ?”  
When lifting up mine eyes, there shone i' the south  
The new moon, with its silver sickle clear,  
Cutting my doubt in twain, and shining mild  
Upon the broken branch, the quiet grave,  
The glitt'ring Rothay with its simple bridge,  
And our uncovered heads, and solemn looks,  
And saying, with a sweet proud smile, “ He shall !  
I am the pledge of immortality  
To him and you, and unto all mankind ;

\* Hartley Coleridge.

† An actual incident.

And, for I ever do renew my youth,  
Your spirits in eternal life shall bloom !”

Shelley ! thou wert the night's own meteor child,  
Shy, but not timid, innocent and lost !  
Flashing around thee momentary noon—  
A noon in which all nature looked anew—  
Its marshes shone like gold, its lizard tribes  
Leaped up as to the dawning of the day !  
Its dreary solitudes began to smile ;  
Its serpents and its eagles woke in joy,  
And dreamed that heaven was once again on earth.  
Alas ! it was a meteor, not the morn !  
And yet a meteor sent out from God,  
Unknowing that He was, and deeming night  
His only mother, and that mother dead,  
Yet striving that dead night to warm with love,  
Like child who wreathes around his mother's corpse  
His eager, fondling, and infatuate arms.  
Poor child ! thy God was nigh thee, though unseen—  
Was in thy soul, thy heart, the very hand  
With which on Alpine hills the words “No God”  
Thou did'st record in daring blasphemy,  
Was strengthened and upheld by God's own power.  
I've seen a lovely boy, in raving fit,  
Frowning in anger in his father's face,  
And shaking his small fist ; the father smiled

To see his own blood in that boiling cheek  
 And knitted, trembling hand! And so, great God!  
 Thou did'st regard that pale and frenzied youth  
 Denying Thee (as though a severed ray  
 Were writing in its wand'rings "There's no sun!")  
 With mild composure, tender sympathy.  
 Lo! the mad poet with his homeless heart,  
 And throbbing forehead rushing out to see  
 Or God, or ghosts, or demons—'tis the same;  
 Through night he hurries on, and hark! his *scream!*  
 Harsh, tuneless, like rock-rasping echo rise  
 In sounds which startle night-birds on their roosts.  
 In vain! for ghosts or God he cannot find,  
 No demon walks the midnight save himself;  
 Far laughter seems to answer his wild cry,  
 Till wearied in his search he lays him down  
 And dreams or weeps away the hours till morn."

Or see him on a spur of Appennine \*  
 Awake beneath a cope of gleaming stars;  
 For every star that crosses o'er the sky,  
 Some strange and wingèd thought careers through him,  
 Till morning finds him sleepless, and he throws  
 His faint and dreamy limbs below a tree,  
 And "then a vision on his brain is rolled,"  
 The last which that strange pen shall e'er transcribe

\* "Spur of Appennine." See his "Triumph of Life:" his last poem.

Upon his lurid, but immortal page.  
Approach, and see the sleeping, grey-haired boy,  
His small head shaded by his thin, pale hand,  
The morning dew starring his beauteous brow,  
His eyes half shut, yet seeing through their lids  
The earth, the ocean, mountains, morning sky ;  
The vision mirrored on his lips alone,  
Which sweetly, sadly, mystically smile  
As the strange pageant passes swiftly by.  
A hoary chestnut leaning o'er his form  
Like the lost mother of his infancy,  
And from below, the ocean's awful voice,  
Presenting the first count of her strong claim  
To make the poet her adopted child !

His bark is launched, 'tis day, but sudden night  
Stoops from the burning sky in thunder gloom,  
Loaded with lightning, winged with tempest fierce,  
And dashes like an eagle o'er the sea.  
At it, and it alone, the storm is aimed ;  
One livid glare is by the lightning shed,  
And in it I behold the poet stand  
And throw aloft his arms to the black sky  
As if protesting 'gainst untimely fate,  
And then he sinks—is gone : a mighty wave,  
Laughing in glee, his body has engulfed !  
While, lo ! the eagle of the storm has passed,

Her feathers smoothed, her hunger all appeased,  
 Bearing to other lands or other worlds  
 Alastor's\* wretched, lonely, noble shade.

Once more upon the sea shore let us stand—  
 It is the broad and breathless hour of noon,  
 Yellow the sands, like burning gold appear,  
 As God's blue canopy the sky is clear,  
 And like the mountains of a picture, stand  
 Afar the Appennines, with soft white peaks  
 Melting, yet monumental in their look,  
 Like ridges in the Red Sea's parted waves.  
 The scene resembles some bright morning dream :  
 It seems as if from out that sparkling foam  
 Another Venus were to lift her head  
 And raise the joy of earth to ecstasy.  
 And yet it is the poet's funeral day !  
 The "Pilgrim of Eternity" † is there,  
 And other noble mourners, mute they stand  
 As if the shade of Shelley hovered near.  
 A fire is kindled—rich and clear the flame,  
 Fed by frankincense, wine, and fragrant gums,  
 And burneth like the genius of the dead,  
 Boldly confronting the Italian sun,  
 And flashing all around its own wild day.

\* "Alastor." Shelley's name for himself in his "Spirit of Solitude."

† "Pilgrim of Eternity." Shelley's title for Byron in "Adonais."



Into that fire the relics of the bard  
Are cast—it licks them up, and seems to cry  
In ev'ry accent of its bick'ring blaze,  
“ Poor trappings these of that immortal man !”  
But, lo ! a marvel and a mystery,  
The heart survives—asbestos in the flame—  
It walks the furnace like an angel's foot,  
And comes unmelted to the other side.  
Emblem, methinks, of that fine element,  
Which more than even genius stamped him great,  
His warm, o'erflowing, and unwearied love.  
Mourners are few, but one we mark is there—  
Is it a spirit, or is it a bird ?  
White-winged, with soft dark eye, and plaintive note.  
She wheels around the fire, and o'er the heads  
Of that small, silent, and high-gifted band—  
They leave the spot at last, but still her wing  
Waves restless o'er the ashes of the pile ;  
And still her scream sounds forth a long farewell,  
Till sets the sun, and then away she sails,  
Marking with moans her solitary way.  
'Tis wingèd nature mourning for her bard,  
Most bird-like poet who has ever sung !

A meteor, not the morn, Alastor was,  
Although he felt a moral morn at hand.  
He sang in misery, but he sang of love ;

Hatred alone he hated—scorn alone  
He scorned—what envy was he did not know,  
For vice and vicious men he pity felt,  
Bigots he tried to love, and would have cooled  
Their flames with his own blood had it availed.  
What awful cloud between him came and Christ,  
Eternity alone can e'er explain !  
Perhaps it was some dreary dogma piled,  
By human notions cold as frosted hands,  
Around the circle glowing 'neath the Cross,  
Which blocked his vision, and repelled his faith.  
Perhaps some damnèd demon was allowed  
To enter that bright soul, and rend that heart  
With crooked claws of doubt, and evil dream.  
Perhaps he saw the truth, but in a form  
So strange and dazzling that it came to him  
In madness and in terror, like an eye  
Torn wide by torture, till he shrieking died.  
And then we listen, and we hear that shriek  
Softened into a low and far-off sound,  
A sob, but not the sob of wild despair.  
Is it the sobbing of a wayward child,  
Ere in his sorrow and his glad surprise  
He faints away into his father's arms ?  
And has the meteor then found the morn ?  
I cannot tell, but this I surely know  
That wiser poets like to him shall rise,

Pouring their fiery music o'er the deep,  
The morning deep, through which the mighty sun  
Of God's last revelation labours up  
To drown in glory them and earth and heaven.  
Hearken, ye peoples, to these wingèd ones,  
Larks of love's coming, morning lost in day,  
Invisible to us, yet from that height  
Pouring down strains of prophet melody,  
To which we listen 'rapt, but see them not  
Till they fall down in death, ev'n as the lark  
Seems, sunbeam-shot, to drop upon the earth,  
*Seeming*, not real, her death by daylight's shaft ;  
And so no poet ever perishes,  
No song that ever gushed at heaven's gate  
But shares in heaven's immortality,  
And writes itself in light o'er "Allah's head."  
So strong is truth, so true is poesy,  
One with each other, they are one with God.



BOOK EIGHTH.

THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT.

ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

CHILDREN of Night—Wild Beasts and Birds—Nightingale—The Suicide—Spinoza—Rousseau—Danton—Swedenborg.

## BOOK EIGHTH.

### THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT.

CHILDREN of night, how manifold they are !

The lion and the tiger are her sons,

Companions meet for her intensest shades ;

Baptized in darkness, fondled, fed by night.

The wolf's bark and the bear's growl sing her  
praise.

Night brings the amnesty of evil things,

Mother of miscreations, creatures foul,

The alligator's fierce eye worships her ;

Under her shade the rat creeps forth to steal,

The bull-frog lifts his croaking cry at night ;

At night, like poisoned jelly, the dull toad,

Trembling at his own loathsome form, crawls out ;

At night the bittern pours her piercing plaint,

The beetle his blind buzzing path pursues,  
The raven ploughs her lone and sullen way,  
The mongrel bat comes sleeping on the wing ;  
And hark ! a hoarse and hornèd laureate,  
The owl to darkness sings his dreary strain.  
And brighter, sweeter children hath she, too,  
The moth, that wingèd worshipper of fire,  
Lost, like mad Parsee, in his burning god ;  
The glowworm, kindling up her lamp of love,  
To lure toward her her dull, lightless lord  
(He Vulcan, she the Venus of the night) ;  
The fire-flies, in their amorous descant,  
Mixing a green and golden radiance  
With the vine blossoms and the corn-fields ripe,  
Touched by the shadows of Italian eve,  
Or midst the forests of the leafy West  
When rains have ceased, gleaming amid the trees  
Or on the grass, a shower of restless stars,  
And straight the wood a milky way becomes,  
Nay, seems it that a million fairy sprites,  
New dropt from heaven, are dancing on the leaves.  
So, nobler laureate than bittern her's,  
Or than the fox or wolf or sullen owl—  
The chary nightingale, with note divine,  
Sweet minion of the darkness, by the day  
Coveted much, but not all wealthy bribes  
Have ever wiled her from the modest perch,



The centre of the low and bushy field,  
Where, hid from sun and soothed by waves, she  
    lurks,

Hiding, methinks in pride, her plumage dull,  
Till the first star shines on her longing eye,  
And the pent soul of music gusheth out,  
Like spark electric from a battery,  
Filling her throat and neck and breast with fire.  
O, spirit bird, thou Orpheus of the hedge,  
With small brown body, and thy soul all song,  
Lifting thy lonely voice to the quiet stars,  
A midnight myth to me thou sometimes seem'st,  
For never yet, except in tranced dream,  
Have I e'er seen thy form or heard thy strain,  
Which, like a tone of the sphere music, floats  
Ling'ring on earth, when all the rest are gone ;  
Lamenting for their loss, foretelling, too,  
Of a time coming when they shall return,  
Melting thy music in their own grand swell,  
Like single flute-note when the band begins.

But darker children hath the night than these  
(That moral night which midnight faintly types),  
Human in form, in destiny how dark,  
Or dark in soul, in purpose, or in crimes,  
Or last, not least, in doubt's tremendous shade ;  
And yet in cheerful charity we ope

Our "Gallery of gloom and sons of night :"  
 And first in order comes

THE SUICIDE.

THY haunts were nature's lovely, lonely scenes,  
 Where sorrow hovers o'er sublimity,  
 Like the soft shadow of an angel's wing ;  
 The dimness of the mountain's shady side,  
 The gloom that gathers round the cataract,  
 The list'ning horror of the pines that stand,  
 Becoming blacker 'neath the thunder cloud ;  
 The centre of the wood at midnight's hush,  
 While the moon's rays and the dim shadows met,  
 And mixing, wrought a weird portentous light ;  
 The top of snowy summit in the dusk,  
 The ridge of twilight rocks smit by the sea ;  
 The solemn concave of the starry worlds,  
 Stooping in speechless throbbings o'er the earth,  
 Unable to convey their tidings deep,  
 Like couriers on their homeward way struck dumb,  
 And dying in that dumbness at the door,  
 Their eager tongues still vibrating in death—  
 There was thy element, and darkness there  
 Seemed gathered, like a temple, o'er thy head,  
 And all its grandeur and its might were thine !

Books to thy solitudes thou often brought'st,  
 Each with the spirit of each spot at one :  
 The page of Shelley, 'neath a roof of pines,  
 While winds were blowing strong, looked strangely wild,  
 Chequered with gleams of light and bars of gloom,  
 After each other flitting fast in chase.  
 With the deep shadow of the mountain cool,

The breathless, burning noon cast far beyond,  
Wordsworth's calm verse so sweetly harmonized,  
That nature seemed describing her own works.  
Beside the cataract thou Byron read'st,  
Till its great tongue, in wrath, cried louder out,  
At the unwonted but congenial voice ;  
Like tiger started by the lion's roar,  
Hades to Tophet answ'ring, deep to deep.  
Keats, by the moonbeam, thy delight to ope,  
And in its glimmer read the swimming page,  
As if it were the reach of some fair stream  
On which her ray, as on Endymion, fell.  
Milton thou carried'st to yon naked crag,  
While thunder stooped her raven wing above,  
And light'ning ran among the quaking rocks,  
And spread out bold his Pandemonian page,  
Reading hell's picture by the light of hell.  
And when above the snows of some high hill,  
The sun was sinking slowly to his rest,  
Thou, with a deep and melancholy joy,  
Saw'st the last ray set upon Dante's page,  
As if it never more could shine again.  
And when thou would'st with Shakespere's darker mood  
Commune, in Timon or in lurid Lear,  
Or in Othello's more impassioned woe,  
In the lone churchyard, by the river's brink,  
Swollen by autumnal rains and raving wide,  
The while the waning moon was climbing up  
The heavy laden east, thou met'st him there,  
Twining with his all gloomy soul thine own,  
Like a pine's shadow with a mountain's mixed,  
And felt his darkness dearer than his light,  
And both authentic as the night and day!

Lonely at first in all thy walks and ways,  
Although at times I see thee start and look,  
As though some form of beauty and of grace  
Divinely dogged thee on thy secret paths ;  
But this prophetic fancy only was,  
And for long years thy sole companions were  
The mountains, rocks, the rivers, and the trees,  
Or, dearer still, their shadows in the wind,  
Flowing, or in the marble noontide fixed ;  
Yet all the while, although men thought thee cold,  
And maidens passed thee by with wond'ring sighs.  
The element of love was boiling strong,  
Like Hecla's lava 'neath its crust of cold ;  
And when, one summer's Sabbath eve, a voice  
Rose in the church, like some intense perfume,  
Thy very strength of softness, balm of power,  
Thy heart went up upon it, as on wind,  
And on its cadences came down again—  
Thine own no more, her's, the unseen, for ever !  
For weeks upon that voice thy fancy lived,  
Framing, below its magic sound—all dreams—  
Of a face fairer than was ever Eve's,  
Of a form statelier than Juno's own,  
Of an arm softer than that lovely one,  
Which first to Anthony, then to the asp,  
With equal grace. great Cleopatra gave ;  
And of a head in white and ample round,  
Comparable to that forehead which erst sprang  
From Jove's own brain, Minerva's beaming brow !  
You met at last, like spirits in the sky—  
The form, the face were not what thou hadst dreamed,  
Yet mild and graceful ; through the eye alone  
Flashed the full volume of her gifted soul,

And in its dark depths swam thine eager heart,  
Like swan upon a twilight shaded lake ;  
Thy love came back upon thee in a light  
Softer and richer, mellow as the moon  
Ris'n in the harvest sky, and gazing straight  
Toward the great round of the setting sun ;  
And as that gorgeous sun and meek-eyed moon  
Are ne'er to wed, so with thy love and thee.  
Below the ardour of her beaming eyes  
A spot appeared, like some faint fleck of cloud  
Staining with delicate red the autumn sky.  
Alas ! of fire it was a quenchless spark,  
Which broadened to a hot and hectic blaze,  
Till, like a martyr, in its flames she died.  
And as thou, standing o'er her silent corpse,  
Whence life, and light, and music, all were fled,  
Or looking after her into the grave,  
Saw'st the black coffin strike against its sides,  
And tar'st thy raven locks ; a lonelier man  
Ne'er stood in howling sorrow 'neath the sun !

She was thy shield against the dreadful doubts  
Which long had leaned o'er thy horizon dim,  
Like eager pouncing fiends. She died, they came,  
Embittered, too, by thy dark misery,  
And found thee all too weak to strangle them.  
“ God—could He be one who could try me thus,  
By tearing out a handful of my heart,  
And crushing it in the untimely dust ?  
A Father was He, or a demon cold,  
To snatch my loved maid from my clasping arms,  
To still and stifle that celestial voice,  
To quench eyes brighter than the evening stars,

And all to punish me, whose crime had been  
To find upon the earth my sister soul?"  
And just as when upon the tropic sky,  
Like a man's hand, a little cloud appears,  
It gathers round it, as by wizard's grasp,  
All elements of darkness and turmoil,  
Till the whole heaven is black with clouds and wind,  
So thine own special quarrel with thy God,  
Swelled and enlarged by ev'ry instance dark  
Of wrong and outrage in the earth's sad tale,  
Grew up gigantic, till it hung the sky  
With blasphemous defiance as with crape,  
And thou and all things orphaned were alike.  
Oh! dark the hour which now upon thee came—  
Hope perished, and the joys which sprang from hope  
Withered like flowers upon a fallen cot;  
Religion, leaving thee and nature both,  
Licked up in leaving, as the noon the dew,  
Their glory and their gladness in one hour.  
Thy harp, which like a spear thou wieldedst strong  
In happier days, now left thy cold lax hand,  
And, like a wounded lion to his den,  
Thy genius to thy soul retired, to die!

One thought alone gave thee some stern relief;  
It came upon thee in a dreary eve,  
When thou hadst gone to weep at Agnes' grave.  
It seemed a shadow from her tomb to rise,  
And cry, "I ne'er again will let thee go!"  
With it at first thou manfully didst strive,  
But who can kill or trample down a shade?  
With thine own shadow, with thyself, at last  
It mingled, as does Acheron with Styx,

And never left thee for a moment more !

Dim was the morning when thou hurriedst out  
 To the lone rock where often thou hadst mused,  
 And met with nature as a mighty friend,  
 Stooping from airy heights to talk with thee.  
 Dark was the pool below, and sadness seemed  
 To hold that day as holy, for her shade  
 On all things lay ; the lonely cataract's voice  
 Sounded like wail of anguish o'er the dead ;  
 And the mist seemed thy shroud, and the rain fell  
 Like tears from heaven o'er thee, and a low voice  
 Which whispered madness ran among the trees !  
 One upward look, as searching for the sun  
 Who would not shine, and then the fatal plunge—  
 The splash, the shriek, the groan, and all was o'er.  
 And where art thou ? I dare not form a dream,  
 I dare not follow the angelic wings  
 Which shiv'ring bear thee to the judgment seat ;  
 I dare not look at the intenser gloom  
 Which shrouds at thy approach the throne of God ;  
 I dare not listen to the thund'rous words  
 Which tell thy dark and speechless destiny ;  
 Enough that I can say, with lowly thoughts,  
 He that hath made thee knows thee, He doth judge  
 Most righteously, the depths of doom are His.

This hapless victim in his later moods  
 Had read Spinoza's deep but dreary page,  
 And 'mong his manuscripts one strain was found,  
 Dedicate to that " God-drunk " child of night.\*

\* So Novalis calls him.

## SPINOZA.

Sublime Spinoza, glorious Sadducee !  
 Actæon like,\* who nature naked saw,  
 Yet fled not at that vision—met the hounds  
 Springing immortal at his mortal head,  
 And soothed them by his magic power to sleep.  
 The awful veil of Isis his to lift,  
 And die not, but with earnest patient eye  
 To meet the mystery which was therein,  
 And, God-like, gaze at and reflect the God.  
 The later Moses, who through clouds and storms,  
 The awe of heaven, earth's howl, the laugh of hell,  
 Went up alone the rugged mount of truth,  
 And found a law of stone upon the top,  
 Divinely stern, kind, and unchangeable,  
 And brought it down to men, who, mad in mirth,  
 Loud in idolatry, and fierce in hate,  
 Mocked him and cried, " No radiance on thy face !  
 Where is the glory of thy great compeer ?  
 Atheist, begone ! back to thy clouds away,  
 And leave us to our gold and games again !"  
 But he no tables broke, no frown return'd,  
 But smiled a sad, serene, and solemn smile,  
 Like that of sun smiling amid the storm,  
 Proclaiming peace in him, pardon to them !  
 Nay, rather thou of the high-priests the Last,  
 Entering the shrine unmitred and ungemmed,  
 No bells upon thy feet, and in thy hand  
 No censer burning with immortal fire ;

\* " Actæon like." See Shelley's Adonais.



But clad in whitest linen, with a pen  
 Of ready writer gleaming in thy grasp,  
 Within thine other hand a parchment roll,  
 Thy motion soft and slow, thine eye a beam  
 Of purest, clearest lustre, spirit light !  
 The veil rolls back, removes, and thou art left  
 Alone, with what ? with nothing, darkness, death ?  
 No ! for amidst the empty yawning gloom,  
 Where erst the glorious Shekinah shone,  
 There slowly shape themselves these words of fire—  
 “ I AM, thou art, and we are one, not twain ;  
 Time is eternity, and God is man,  
 And life, and death, and law, and all are one ;  
 The spirit and the body are the same.  
 The soul of beasts, and men, and worms, and stars,  
 Dwelleth in Thee, and me, and all besides,  
 Life, Law, and Mind are the great triune God.”  
 Calmly the high priest copies out the words,  
 And with a quiet sigh he leaves the shrine.

The Sanhedrim are met in conclave stern,  
 Severe in look, long bearded, serpent eyed,  
 Sitting in darkness ; for the gloomy room  
 Has but one taper shining in the midst,  
 Sickly and wan—it is Spinoza's soul !  
 And under it there stands a pail of blood,  
 And over it there towers an aged priest,  
 White haired, white bearded, girt for sacrifice ;  
 He lifts the candle in his quiv'ring hands,  
 And cries—“ Eternal curses on the soul  
 This taper doth denote ; may it be bathed  
 In fires unquenchable, as I this plunge  
 In human blood. Down, down, thou Sadducee.

Into Gehenna's flames for evermore."  
 A solitary hiss, and all is done,  
 And growls of savage joy pronounce Amen !  
 See yonder man in haste leaving the spot :  
 With stealthy step, and circumspective look,  
 He finds the immortal sitting in his room,  
 Lost in the richest reverie of truth,  
 Rapt far above the sun in lofty thought.  
 He tells him of the deed of darkness done,  
 Spinoza smiles, as though Jove's statue smiled  
 From its lone height upon the Capitol,  
 Down on the clamours of the crowd below,  
 And says, " Fear not, my friend, for wisdom's child,  
 He shall be justified, and these forgot ;  
 The spirit they have plunged in night and blood  
 Shall rise and shine a star in fame's proud heaven."

Turn next and gaze upon the wild

ROUSSEAU.

A zebra soul, spotted with light and dark—  
 Swift, shy, and solitary, was Rousseau,  
 Alone in creed, for not Geneva stern,  
 Nor Rome, nor France, with her denial fierce,  
 Could ever bind or captivate his soul.  
 Even as the silkworm from her bowels weaves  
 Her fairy webs, he his religion wove  
 From the fantastic depths of his own dreams ;  
 His faith was a luxurious fantasy.  
 No ripple on *his* sacred stream, no thorns,  
 But roses round the forehead of *his* Christ ;  
 No Jacob's stony pillow 'neath his head,

Nor the steep ladder leading up to God,  
 But bosom soft and warm as swan's, from which  
 He saw sweet sights, and dreamt delirious dreams.  
 His God was love, but not that lofty love  
 Which bides its time, husbands its tenderness,  
 Feeds with harsh med'cines, sets to sleep with blows!  
 Loves far too deeply oft to blab its love,  
 Folds over its fav'rites' frames a rough bear's skin,  
 Lays them on couch of hair, and cries "good night!"  
 Nay, sometimes gives them little during life,  
 But leaves them a rich treasure in its will,  
 Such is the love of Him the Chistian loves,  
 But not thy languid deity's, Rousseau!  
 Repelled from Sinai by its fiery screen,  
 From Calvary's hill by its wet marge of blood,  
 Yet, with his face reverted there, he plunged  
 A truant soul into the wilderness,  
 Which for a time became a heav'n to him.  
 The very turf beneath him knew his tread,  
 And laughed a gladder green when he arrived;  
 The primrose seemed an old familiar friend;  
 The breezes gave him welcome with their sighs;  
 And he with nature wedded, and was one.  
 Nature his bride, and not his mother was,  
 His love to her was passion, agony,  
 And, like that fond pair in the eastern tale,  
 Burying alive to glut their fierce desire,  
 And turned to ashes for their fatuous sin,  
 He was at last consumed in his own fires!  
 His sole companion in those wanderings wild,  
 Besides the unseen spirit of the scene,  
 Was neither maid nor child. but his dear dog,  
 A living satire upon man, who walked

Beside his master as beside a god,  
 Silent when he was still, licking his hand  
 When he was sad, and looking up his eye  
 As men look up the blue dark heav'n of night,  
 When inspiration in that glowing orb  
 Lightened and low'red at once, like summer storm ;  
 And he the strange idolatry returned,  
 His dog became his demon ; he with him  
 Held frequent converse, paid him homage wild,  
 Trusted him while he trusted none besides,  
 Loved him as all his life he loved but one  
 (Her, namely, who took pity on his youth,  
 And for his sake doubly disgraced her name).\*  
 True lover of the universe, Rousseau,  
 With all his errors, I proclaim, and see  
 Him standing on that lonely height from whence  
 The Alps, the Lake, the Jura, and Mont Blanc,  
 Were shown in autumn's as in heaven's light.  
 Did he a moment dream he was in heaven,  
 And did, between the scene and the fond thought,  
 That he, poor wand'rer, had returned to God,  
 Joy become rapture, rapture rush to tears ?  
 I know not ; but some golden tears he shed,  
 And poured some blessed sobs from his full heart.  
 Yet nature, all unequal to the work  
 Of soothing his sad soul, at last he knew,  
 Cool as a leaf, upon his brow she laid  
 Her hand ; but the hot fever burnèd on,  
 And when he tried to twine her lofty joys  
 With the low pleasures of a sensual life,  
 It seemed as though round mud-stakes should be curled  
 The lovely vine blooms of Italian hills,

\* Madame Warens.

And at the filthy compost he himself  
Shudd'ring drew back, and cursed it in his ire ;  
Then, with deep disappointment in his look,  
With fury in his soul, and gestures wild,  
He fired the fillets on his gifted head,  
And like the steers in Thrasymene's pass,  
Lowling out madness ran athwart the world,  
And called on nations to be mad as he.  
An unbaptized John Baptist to the time,  
Forerunner to an avatar of wrath !  
Yet great the picture of this single man,  
Who long had silent been, or stuttered deep,  
Lab'ring for language as a wounded bird  
To fly, from an unhallowed solitude  
Come forth, his tongue touched with wild eloquence,  
As with strange fire, his eye a sanguine star,  
His hand seeming to sway a viewless lance,  
And with a voice which rang from Alps to Pole,  
Calling on men to trample on all chains,  
Grind down all customs, be their savage selves,  
Abolish old things, and make all things new !  
His voice was heard, and answered first with scorn  
And hatred, his books burned, his name proscribed ;  
But speedily the truth that he announced,  
Not less the lurid falsehood, struck the age,  
And laid the train, which years beyond his death  
Wrapt France and Europe and the world in flames.  
He meanwhile growling to his den retired,  
Old, wearied, woebegone, companionless,  
(Saving one wretched waif of womanhood,  
Who clung to him as seaweed to a wreck).  
Friendship he ne'er had known, his love was gone,  
His children he had shed from him like leaves,

His dog was dead, that music which had long,  
 Like voice of pitying angel from the air,  
 Sweetened his heart amid its misery,  
 Could soothe no more, had long since sighed its last.  
 Desp'rate he seeks the solace death can give,  
 But ere his life-blood quite has ebbed away  
 Must once more see the sun and smiling earth.  
 The curtain opens, lo ! the Titan old,  
 Burning in the full flood of July blaze,  
 And shining on his own adopted land.  
 It is enough—one look of longing love,  
 One pant of strong desire to reach his beams,  
 And like a dewdrop in the morn exhales  
 The hapless, restive spirit of Rousseau,  
 Leaving a chequered but a deathless fame,  
 And France for fifty years his monument !

Rousseau's authentic rugged son comes next.

DANTON.\*

*First—The Native Homestead.*

All day he ploughs upon the Aube's green brink,  
 Or binds the sheaves adown the harvest-field ;

\* The idea of this poem is that of a mind of great powers and passions, and originally innocent and virtuous, allowing his passions to overpower his good inclinations and enslave his intellect. The fierce controversy between the two natures however continues, and produces a misery, which conjoined with patriotic sentiment, throws him into the vortex of public life, and at last, still unsatisfied, into crime and blood. This ministers a certain desperate relief and outlet, but his whole soul is not in it, and the horseleech cry "Give, give" is still heard within when true love dawns on his troubled soul like moonlight, and makes him all but happy. It is, however, too late for

The brawny youth, with eyebrows dark as death,  
Long hair, like a black shadow, hanging loose,  
Huge lips, some giant cup of luxury  
Seeming to sip in vision—stalwart limbs  
And stature shooting up to Anak height.  
Alone he ever is—the reapers shrink  
In wid'ning circle round him as he moves—  
Moves like a Cyclops, monarch of the field,  
Yet never sullen or disdainful he.  
The weak he helps, although to idlers stern,  
And sometimes o'er the harvest field he flings  
The lightning of a large, frank, beaming smile,  
Which makes men love him as they love a day,  
Which will not die till it has shed one gleam  
To prove it is a day and not a night,  
For all its thickset gloom and blust'ring storms.  
When eve arrives, along the river's course  
They hear his voice coming in torrent shout,  
With half-heard words of burning eloquence :  
He is rehearsing his tremendous part ;  
Now straining for some tyrant's death, and now  
Seeking by pleadings strong to save himself ;  
Now spurring on the Demos like a steed,  
And trying now to seize him by the mane,  
And hurl him back upon his fatal way.  
“Madman” or “sleepwalker” the common cry,  
But some there are who see him as he is,  
And trembling as the very darkness too  
Seems trembling at his loosen'd lion voice

permanent peace, remorse for the past awakens, the toils meanwhile of his position close around him, and he finds in death the sole solution of the problem of his history, though what that is the poet is unable, of course, fully to utter.

Whisper "George Danton must be great or dead,  
 Be king or corpse before mid age shall he."  
 He to his couch returns, and lies at large,  
 Fixing his fierce eyes on the midnight stars,  
 Till sleep spotted with dreams of power descends,  
 And like a leopard's skin enwraps him round.

*Second.—The Loss of the Birthright.*

How innocent was Esau in his youth !  
 No blood but deer's blood on his hairy hands,  
 No trouble in his soul, or on his brow,  
 Till in an evil hour by hunger stung  
 He sold his birthright for a mess of meat !  
 So is young Danton free from sin or guile,  
 His only weakness is a youthful love,  
 His soul's on fire with patriotic zeal,  
 Which points him on to Paris as his goal.  
 One kiss in pledge of pure affection given,  
 And one deep heaving sigh, he thither hies ;  
 But even as Cancer and the summer sun,  
 Who ent'ring his red sign turns fiery too,  
 Fierce in his rise, imperious in his noon,  
 Large and luxurious when going down.  
 So Danton was by Paris strengthened, spoiled ;  
 Like Jonah's gourd his intellect grew great,  
 But the worm Passion, at an equal pace  
 Fatten'd and fed upon the thick large leaves.  
 Delilahs knew their Samson—he was bound,  
 But yielded to the softness, not the strength  
 Of their delicious and deadly toils ;  
 But not all Syren dalliance or cups,



Nor yet the arid meshes of the law  
 Could long entwine or please a soul so strong.  
 In dream I see him catch and burst their bands,  
 In dream I see him seek his maid once more,  
 Whom he had cast away like withered flower.  
 In dream I see him grasp the sickle keen,  
 Which once upon the banks of Aube had gleamed,  
 Like a great glist'ning new moon mid the corn.  
 In dream I hear him cry, "Oh! Father, God!  
 Oh! Jesu! be to me as when a child  
 I named Thy name in many a simple hymn,  
 And saw Thee looking o'er my mother's head!"  
 He woke and would have fled, but round him fiends,  
 "Ill-favoured ones" were ranged—Poverty said,  
 "Thy feet are limed by debt;" and Gambling cried,  
 "Revenge awaits thee in that well-known hell,  
 Where thou wert robbed of all;" and grisly Doubt  
 Shrieked out, "Your God and Jesus are but dreams;  
 Hast thou Rousseau and Volney read so ill?"  
 Lust pointed to the Palais Royale full,  
 And chief Ambition came and touched his brow,  
 And cried, "The Destinies for this a crown,  
 Worthy of such a noble pile of power,  
 Have woven already, and shall put it on."  
 Most miserable comforters, and yet  
 He pauses, listens, yields, and is undone!

*Third.—The Outlet of the Esau.*

Strong France had newly waked from her old dreams,  
 And felt on her bewildered brow the morn,  
 The resurrection morn of liberty!

Half dreaming still she sets about her work  
In haste, like sleepy drudge, surprised by day,  
Confounding all things in belated toil,  
Yet nobly struggles in that early light,  
To set her house in order, fence her foes.  
Confirm her empire, meet her destiny,  
And show the world she had become alive.  
Emerging from his bagnios and hells  
Danton at evening stands beside the street,  
Where heaves a multitude of murmuring men.  
Like blast new wing'd he lifts his mighty voice ;  
At first they heave and murmur more and more,  
And many cries are heard, " Who is this man,  
Or monster rather, with that hideous face ?"  
And others say, " Jacques Danton he is named,  
A roué-lawyer from the banks of Aube,  
Known to all scenes of scandal and of sin ;"  
And then a hiss and hoot terrific rise,  
But still unaltered doth the blast blow on,  
Nay strengthens, rises, till the thunderbolt  
It carries on its wings comes crashing down,  
And hearts are torn in sunder, voices hushed.  
Once heard, for ever heard this strong man is ;  
He gathers up the thoughts and cries of men,  
And gives them back in thunder to their ears,  
Enlarged in volume, edged with lurid fire,  
And is their idol, 'cause he is themselves  
Condensed and curdled into one stern soul !  
Diffused and vast on the club bench he lies,  
Sucking an orange, hacking at a quill  
Till come the stress and groin of the debate ;  
And now or never must its issue be,  
Then sudden, like a lion from his sleep

He rears his shaggy head and deep sunk eyes,  
And bellows out a few wild startling words,  
Wild in their language and their images,  
But sound and solid in their inmost core.  
It is a storm of sense blows from his lips,  
Seamed with colossal figures as with fire ;  
And when he closes the debate is done,  
And "action" is the order of the hour,  
Danton, forgotten in the blast he raised,  
May suck his orange, hack his quill once more !  
The king's head falls, his murderers are aghast,  
All Europe foams around them like a sea,  
And every voice is crying "Blood for blood."  
Brunswick has taken Verdun, Paris quakes,  
Their Mirabeau is dead, but Danton lives  
And towers to meet the danger as though he  
Had been the only regicide in France !  
"This is my matter, let me mate with this,  
I take your deed upon my shoulders strong ;  
Your sparks of dying courage I collect  
Into this dauntless heart, and in your name  
I cry, ' Ye kings who threaten us I hurl  
At you as gage of battle a king's head ! ' "

A shock of courage vibrates through their souls,  
In desp'rate hope they rally round their chief.  
No slumber more in Paris than in hell.  
"The night is coming, every man must work,  
And everything, the guillotine must work,  
The storm-bell shall be rung by sleepless hands,  
The alarm-gun shall be fired, hark how it booms !  
All men in Paris, ye must rush to arms,  
( ' And so shall we, ' the women eager cry )  
Flock to the Champ de Mars, enrol yourselves ! "

One Dura \* furnace doth the plain become,  
Boiling with frenzy, bubbling o'er with oaths,  
Bristling with armour, and baptized with tears  
From mothers' eyes, which swell the raving flames ;  
And to the tocsin as to thousand drums  
The furnace moves and tosses to and fro,  
And nought but blood can calm and quell its waves.  
One man has raised, and now divides the sea.  
With long earth quaking strides which cleave a space,  
And make a dreadful silence for themselves,  
See Danton to the commune forcing way,  
And bursting in he lifts his swarthy hand,  
And cries, " It is the *Pas de Charge* ye hear,  
That tocsin sounds the peal of instant fight.  
And what shall conquer and hurl back your foes ?  
To dare, to dare, and without end to dare !"  
It is a trumpet in these restless halls !  
First awes to silence, then to murm'ring sounds  
Awakens—then as from a trance all start,  
Wave wild their arms, throw up their sanguine caps,  
And shout, " We dare, we dare, we always dare ;  
To dare or die is all that we can do.  
To die or dare with Danton who shall not ?  
Lead us to arms—tell us the foe is here !"  
The living tempest bursts into the street,  
And meets and mingles with the furnace there,  
Even as a strong wind meets a burning wood !  
But blood must flow before the two are one,  
And ere the frenzy fever has been slaked,  
And blood does flow—September's sun can tell !  
Drop from some demon lip, among the crowd,

\* See Daniel, chap. iii.

The words, "To th' Abbaye, Abbaye! haste away!  
The prisoners are there, and we shall flesh  
Our rage on them, before the foe arrive;  
Our lips are parched, as be the lips of the damned,  
And have no drink but fire or blood. Away!"  
But ere the Abbaye's reached, first thirty priests,  
Riding towards the place of refuge deemed,  
Are torn out from the quaking carriages,  
And, amid yells and curses, sink in death.  
Then round the prison door gathers a ring  
Of faces, besides which the swords are tame,  
The pikes, vine blossoms, and the axes, flowers!  
Faces, here black as soot—there red as flames,  
Sharpened with hunger and with thirst agape,  
Painted with blood, and writhen with fierce rage,  
Turned all, like cannons' mouths, towards one point,  
Whence they expect, with smacking lips, their prey!  
And for four days this ring of death nor sleeps  
Nor moves, save when a wretched victim, tossed,  
Half-tried, half-dressed, half-dead, amidst their blades,  
Falls in a hundred bloody fragments down,  
And "Vive la Liberté" echoes around!  
The court within is swift, without the swords  
Are sharp; the men and women, too, are dry,  
And rich and foaming is the cup they drink:  
The blood of priests and people, high and low,  
Old men and youthful princesses commixed,  
Diluted, too, with eager draughts of wine,  
A sacrament of hell; while from above,  
The sun seems chained to look upon the scene,  
The tocsin sinks into a mournful note,  
Heard scarcely o'er the frightful sounds below;  
And swiftly rises at the Abbaye door

A pile of corpses, knit by bloody band,  
 Else torn in chaos, limbs from heads disjoined,  
 Fingers from hands, and feet from legs rent off ;  
 And high above the ghastly pyramid  
 A hand appears, spread out, as if in prayer,  
 Towards the far off, stern, unhelping heavens !  
 And Danton, where is he ? He stands aloof,  
 The shrouded Pluto\* of th' abhorrèd scene,  
 Frowning, but calm, his brow a mystery.  
 Fit lord he seems of this dire judgment deed,  
 Maddened and fiend-inspired all for this hour,  
 When his strong soul, in blood, has OUTLET FOUND.

*Fourth—The “Late Remorse of Love.”*

But the whole soul of Danton was not there ;  
 Although his black brows ne'er relaxed their frown,  
 Nor did he move one step to check the crime,  
 His heart but half consented to the deed ;  
 And when men came and humbly asked his grace,  
 He granted each and every one's request,  
 And, 'mid this night of horror, made him friends !  
 One friend, at least, he made by one mild word :  
 A maiden came, fair as a dream of youth,  
 Her raven hair disheveled, her head bare,  
 A blush of pride tinging a cheek of snow,  
 Grief in her eye and beauty on her brow ;  
 Her step is grace, her attitude despair,  
 She seems an angel, whom revolt's wild wind,  
 When fell the hosts of Lucifer, had seized

\* “An enemy, whose death he caused, frightened at his language, but doing justice, even in death, to the genius that blasted him, called Danton the ‘Pluto of Eloquence.’”—*Michelet*.

Against her will, and hurried to the deep,  
Yet there remains a loyal angel still.  
Approaching the grim chief, whose brows relaxed  
At sudden sight of such strange loveliness.  
“Danton,” she cried, “I ask my father’s life,  
My plea’s, he’s innocent ; and thou art brave,  
Too brave to trample on a fallen man.  
Lambert his name ; thou know’st him—set him free,  
And win a double blessing on thy cause,  
And pardon for thy share in these foul deeds.”  
“I grant it,” said the Titan, the old smile,  
Lost by him on the soft brink of the Aube  
Long years ago, appearing on his lip ;  
“The more that thou hast asked it as a right,  
Fearing not him whom all but thee do fear,  
Meeting him as thy equal, and no more :  
A queenly soul must fill that glorious form !”  
And as he spoke, the love which had retired  
Within the caverns of those far-drawn eyes,  
And slept for a whole decade, as if dead,  
Revived, awakened, and came forth again,  
And shone like moonlight in a mountain cave.  
And as he looks insatiate on her charms,  
The minions whisper what they dare not speak :  
“The Minister of Justice is in love !  
Have tigers bowels ? hath a demon heart ?”  
Now see the victor of the world o’ercome,  
The dread of despots is himself a slave,  
And beautiful his bondage ! In a leash  
As soft as silk, as bright as gold, he walks,  
Or sits a lamb at Isabella’s feet.  
Amid that tott’ring world they wed, like two  
Who in an earthquake clasp each other’s hands,

And bask mid twilight in each other's smile.  
 Danton has now a home—a happy home,  
 Where, when the stern hour of the public's past,  
 A mild eye meets him, and a soft hand soothes,  
 And a true heart compares its thoughts with his ;  
 None there beside them, save, at times, Camille,\*  
 The Charles Lamb of Paris, laughing light,  
 And stutt'ring out his fancies, fresh and fine,  
 To which the lazy giant listens pleased,  
 Peaceful and silent, as a pyramid,  
 A gentleness steals o'er him like a shade ;  
 But no more than a pyramid doth move  
 When a soft lunar shadow swathes its brow,  
 Does he recoil from his sublime resolve.  
 From her all-lovely lap he tears himself  
 At times, and makes the commune thrilling feel  
 That a strong soul is strengthened more by love.  
 But all of fury and of frenzy's gone,  
 For hear what words come from his dauntless tongue :  
 " My name ! what is it ? Blighted be my name !  
 The cause alone, for which I live, is great,  
 And must be pled by love as well as power :  
 I stood for doom—I stand for mercy now !"  
 The commune cheer, but Robespierre smiles—a smile  
 Deadly as that of some dark poison plant  
 Opening its blossoms to the midnight moon !  
 Great Danton hurries home, and sleeps serene,  
 A child-like demigod in those dear arms,  
 His sins abandoned, all his heart wounds healed,  
 And the sad certain future undisclosed !

\* Camille Desmoulins.



*Fifth—The Swift Solution.*

The morning comes, and Danton hies away,  
 Drawn part by duty, part by destiny,  
 To the beloved banks of native Aube.  
 The spring of France, an early, lovely spring,  
 Is there before him, and within him, too ;  
 His step and heart are light, as when a boy.  
 The man who trode in blood now presses flowers ;  
 That form, at which even freedom trembled,\* stalks  
 Alone, through grassy lanes and quiet woods,  
 Harmless as are the shadows of the trees.  
 Nay, lo ! he seeketh out his fav'rite pool,  
 Covered by copsewood from the glare of noon,  
 And there disporting his prodigious limbs,  
 And shaking showers of water from his locks,  
 Seems some stray merman to the wond'ring swains ;  
 The feuds and horrors of the maddened time,  
 The very name of Robespierre forgot,  
 Nought in his heart but love and child-like joy ;  
 The only sigh he heaves is when he cries,  
 " I would my lovely wife were with me here !"  
 Thus glide away some days in peaceful bliss ;  
 But night around him her prophetic shade  
 Casts terrible, in shape of lurid dream,  
 And makes him tremble who ne'er shook before,  
 And never more, sleeping or waking, shall !  
 In dream he stands before a judgment seat,  
 On which there sits a form, whose face is veiled,  
 But whose hand holds an axe of keenest edge ;  
 Life-like, and quiv'ring in its eagerness,  
 A sallow visage he has seen before,

\* So said St. Just of him.

But cannot, in the ignorance of dream,  
 Recall to mind or name, stares full at him,  
 Like basilisk's dull glitt'ring stony eye,  
 The while a torrent of accusing speech  
 Breaks from his lips, yellow with livid rage ;  
 And when it pauses, ever and anon  
 Upstarts a ghost—another—third—and more,  
 The frightful punctuation of the speech !  
 One bodiless, another headless ; one  
 Cleft through with ghastly gash from crown to foot ;  
 Some throwing up to heaven their bloody stumps,  
 While others wave their cropped and mangled hands—  
 All shrieking, as they gaze in Danton's face,  
 “ His words are true—on thee we lay our death—  
 Thou hounded'st on the fiends that sent us here,  
 And we expect thee in our horrid realms,  
 Butchered and mutilated like ourselves.”  
 But Danton's soul not even this appals ;  
 He lifts his mighty arm and mightier voice,  
 Begins to shake him, as at other times,  
 And these the words he feels upon his tongue :  
 “ Ye pale and piping shades, know ye not me ?  
 And dare ye George Jacques Danton thus bespeak  
 Through your thin throats, or through that green-eyed  
     slave,  
 Whom now I know for coward Robespierre—”  
 And thus was speaking, when *the veiled face*  
*On the tribunal was unshaded slow,*  
 And Danton sees and knows it, and drops down  
 Silent and blasted, as though thunderstruck.  
 It is HIS OWN FACE, when he left the Aube,  
 All radiant with innocence and youth,  
 While, glimmering behind, a fairer one,

Accusing, yet compassionate, appears ;  
And, unsubdued by victims or by foes,  
Before his better nature, early love,  
And his uncovered conscience, Danton falls !  
He sweltering wakes—but sleeps again, and lo !  
His angel wife is standing by his side,  
Pallid, but lustrous—sad, but with a smile,  
Which seems more love to speak than heart could hold.  
He murmurs, “ What, beloved, brings thee here ? ”  
She answers, “ Danger lowers, come home, oh, come ! ”  
“ Whence, Isabella, dost thou danger dread ? ”  
She speaks, he listens, but he cannot hear,  
Her voice is drowned in a loud thund’ring knock,  
Which rouses him to read a missive swift,  
Brought by a courier on life and death :  
“ Return this day, or never, to thy home.”  
He gains the city, to his house he speeds,  
His wife knows nothing of a danger near,  
The missive has been sent by hand unknown.  
“ A false alarm,” he thinks, and is at peace,  
And then for days in home’s delights he swims,  
Infatuate all his youth and hope renew’d.  
In vain do friends come pallid to his door—  
One crying, “ It was I that sent thee word ;  
Thy name is down upon the wretch’s book,  
I saw it, stamped with triple cross of red.  
Off to the tribune, ’tis thine only chance,  
The tyrant cannot stand thy look, far less  
The terrors of thy voice and words of wrath,  
Or else this very night a captive thou.”  
“ They dare not touch me,” with an angry roar,  
The Titan says, and as he goes to rest,  
“ They dare not,” still his last words to his wife,

Half soothing her disturbed and yearning soul.  
But long ere the first ray of the spring sun  
Has risen reluctant on the guillotine,  
The myrmidons of Robespierre gird the house,  
And seize and strip and bind the Samson stern ;  
And ev'ry morning table in the town  
Shakes at the news, " Danton himself is ta'en !"  
The Luxembourg, like hell, is moved throughout,  
And all the captives crowd around, and cry,  
" Art thou, too, then become as weak as we ?"  
Few days there passed—how long to him they seem !  
How proud the tossings of his sleepless frame !  
How terrible that silent storm, his brow !  
How passionate those flakes of Etna's flame,  
Which leave his lips in short and sudden bursts :  
" Robespierre must follow me ; I hear his head,  
After mine, rolling down the precipice.  
A noodledom of blood now governs France :  
I might have been its saviour—'tis too late !  
A year ago I moved myself for this  
Consistory of Cain, which slays me now ;  
I pardon beg for this of God and man.  
I'd rather be a lonely fisherman  
Drawing his nets upon the banks of Aube,  
Than meddle more with government of men !  
I fear not death ; departure much I mourn  
From thee, fair France, and thee, my lovely wife ;  
And the deep purpose I had framed within,  
To say, ' Be still, ' to this strange seething deep !"  
These few wild restless days and nights have passed,  
And Danton now must stand before his judge—  
Which is the judge and which the criminal ?  
How Fouquier pales and shrinks at that deep eye,

Which fastens him at once, like barbèd hook,  
And keeps him writhing round it as it rolls.  
“Thy name and dwelling,” faintly he inquires :  
“Danton my name, a name thou knowest thyself—  
Known, too, right well through all these troublous times.  
My dwelling soon shall be in Nothing’s womb,  
Where all men meet and none can know they do ;  
That sullen, dreamless, endless sleep’s my doom,  
But in great history’s pantheon I  
Shall live for ever with the mighty there.”  
Charges are made against him, witnesses  
Appear and falter out some flagrant lies ;  
He hears till he can hear no more, then lifts  
His voice, like thunder growling ere it roars,  
Shakes loose his locks, through which his eyes look out,  
Islanded in the darkness, like two stars  
Forcing an angry pathway through a cloud ;  
Throws back his head like swimmer in roused sea,  
And makes a silence like the silence which  
Precedes the crash of earthquake ’mid the hills,  
Then speaks as none but Danton spoke before.  
Speaks !—But such speaking who can e’er record ?  
The whole tremendous man is heard at once,  
Like Gorgon locks endowed with voice his hair  
Speaks ! speak his eyes, two pits of fire,  
Each arm’s an orator ; his very stamp,  
Like a strange separate existence speaks.  
And when words fail, like ocean choked in storm,  
His lips, his eyes, his arms, still eloquent,  
Roll in their unheard billows on the shore !  
Yet though his foes are pale, his friends elate,  
And though the people murmur, and the night  
Of the first day of trial close in hope,

Next eve a march is stolen, and his fate  
Is fixed by lawless effort, sentence passed,  
“ Danton and Danton's friends must die to-day !”  
In vain like straggling leaf he tears the deed,  
And tramples on it with a furious foot,  
He must the tumbril climb and meet his doom.  
Look at him as he stands and glares around—  
His brow is pale ; his eyes, with watching dim,  
Would weep but that strong purpose keeps them dry ;  
A fearless horror rests upon his face,  
Which hides below a bleeding, broken heart,  
Rent into twain by love and by remorse,  
But held together by the power of pride,  
By dauntless courage, and deep unbelief,  
And scorn of death, and all that lies beyond !  
A calm comes on him as he moves along,  
Shed down as from some viewless canopy,  
And if he cannot live the king of France,  
As though he were its monarch he shall die !  
He lifts aloft his head as 'twere an Alp ;  
His arm is tied and helpless, yet appears  
Only power petrified, a sceptre bound ;  
His look is stern, and yet when poor Camille  
Resists and writhes in sorrow and in fear,  
He darts again the smile which long ago  
Had made a sunshine on the fields of home,  
And says, “ Heed not, my friend, that rabble vile,  
Assert thy noble self, and dare to die.”  
And though one moment shoots a pang across  
The marble of his death-defying face,  
Like flash of lightning shivering the Sphinx,  
As “ Oh ! my wife,” he cries, “ my better soul,  
Shall Danton then never behold thee more ? ”

Yet ere the fiery furrow fills with tears,  
 "Danton, no weakness!" he aloud exclaims;  
 One smile of scorn cast on the guillotine,  
 One look of lofty pity on the crowd,  
 One word to the base minion of the law,  
 "Show my head to the people, wilt thou not?  
 'Tis worth the showing," and great Danton dies.  
 His head is shorn away, his body vast  
 Falls spouting out a cataract of blood,  
 The while the crowd are hushed in mute amaze,  
 Through which it seems as if a spirit passed,  
 Like a strong shudder piercing the deep pause,  
 And the "solution" of his problem comes.

And here in brief, "Last of the train of night,  
 If better he belongs not to the dawn,"  
 See the true-hearted sage, old

SWEDENBORG.

A phantom stealing out when day is done,  
 But night not fully come, the Stockholm sage!  
 In company with all those shapeless forms  
 Which haunt the shadows of ambiguous eve,  
 With twilight-piercing eyes he walked the woods,  
 And saw what would have shocked all maid-like men,  
 The snake uncoiling in the early moon,  
 The lizard sliding through the dank dark grass;  
 The eyes of toads, dragging their lazy length  
 O'er the wet garden beds and forest walks;  
 The sudden frog leaping across the path,  
 Great bloated spiders sitting in their webs,

Surrounded by a thousand ghosts of flies ;  
 The rav'nous rat retiring to his hole :  
 All these, and other miscreations dark,  
 He saw distinct as day, and shuddered not—  
 No, though he thought they were of men the types,  
 The spawn of human sin, if not the souls  
 Of sinners *consciously* incarnate there,  
 Loathing themselves, and yet afraid to die,  
 Lest shapes more hideous still should wrap them round,  
 And form of guilt exponents still more foul.  
 The mitred lizard,\* with his ghastly ruff,  
 Like demon in full dress, disturbed not him ;  
 Even when he felt that never night-mare dream  
 Has touched the hem of that all-horrid shape !  
 Less dreadful to his eye than yonder wretch,  
 With human form, and well-smooth'd face and heart,  
 Rotten with a whole lifetime's selfishness :  
 Or yonder crowned and jewelled miscreant,  
 Who dyes his diamonds in the blood of men,  
 And oils his purple garments with their tears !

Himself, to many, Swedenborg may seem—  
 A curious hybrid of enormous size,  
 Between a man and monster vibrating ;  
 And changing oft his form, as doth a dream,  
 Or cloud colossal in the autumn sky,  
 Which now (as we have seen) appears a range  
 Of mountains hung on high, with ragged cliffs ;  
 Then a vast castle, lording o'er the west ;  
 Then a crown faded—crown of god of winds !  
 And then a lion's head, with open mouth

\* "Mitred Lizard." A horrid looking creature of the lizard species, to be seen in the British Museum.



Seeking to swallow up the setting sun ;  
And then a thousand fragments in the air,  
Hasting from one another in full flight ;  
And then clear sky, with a lone shining star !  
And so through that wild mind did visions pass,  
Fantastic often, and for ever great.  
How well he loved to haunt the churchyard still !  
A gentle, glorious ghoul, to watch the time  
When rose the spirit-body from the dust,  
True to the ancient term on the third day.  
There o'er the scarce-cold corpse, and fresh green grave,  
When night is breathless, and the dead seem hushed  
In silence, deeper than their wonted sleep,  
He notes a vapour dim exhale, like man  
In shape, and fixed upon his half-seen lips  
He sees his destiny of weal or woe ;  
If weal, an upward smile, which makes the stars  
Look happier as they watch the rising ray ;  
If woe, a glance reluctant at the tomb,  
A glance which says, " Hide me, oh ! hide me still  
From Him that sits upon that dreadful throne !"  
And thus at midnight, resurrection morn  
Dawns on our sage, " born out of time," alone—  
Alone, till his weird mantle, starred with sprites,  
Gemmed with oracular stones from heaven's gate,  
And here and there shot with Gehenna's flames,  
Fell on the kindred head of strange old Blake,\*  
Who shudd'ring, half in fear, and half in joy,  
Saw, and proclaimed he saw, the vision too !  
But greater dreams and visions he must see,  
Explore the hells, which glare and boil below,  
Number their victims, tell their torments o'er,

\* Blake, the painter, and author of the famous " Lines to a Tiger."

Yet do so more in sorrow than in ire,  
For nought of demon or inquisitor  
Dwelt in that calm, deep, scientific soul ;  
Instinct, too, with a charity sublime,  
Which reared o'er every land and every faith,  
Its own peculiar and blessed heaven !  
For what is heaven, he felt, but the rich flower  
Of goodness ; and where goodness is, is heaven :  
If not in full, at least, in germ and hope.  
That small, mean, narrow, and detested dream  
Of a mere handful, like the Spartan few,  
Or Gideon's selected company,  
Inhabiting the lonely mount of God,  
While all beneath's one seething pit of fire,  
Howling out groans, which drown the anthems thin,  
The Swede's broad nature spurned from him in scorn,  
Feeling a baffled God no God at all ;  
And that a devil triumphing in hell  
O'er the majority of human souls,  
Although tormented as he triumphs there,  
Is still triumphant—is the stronger power.  
The kingdom of the Lord, our sage believed,  
To come not in a gross, objective shape,  
But through the slow and mighty charm of love ;  
And even, as he deemed, the reign of life  
O'er death begins not in one awful hour  
Of resurrection, at a literal trump,  
But is for ever coming, and to come—  
A second birth of souls from death's stern womb,  
So he more truly felt that love's sweet dawn  
Rises continually upon the world,  
Its word of power conqu'ring, to conquer still,  
Victory every moment its reward :

And if a single soul on earth be lost,  
 'Tis because God, although Almighty love  
 Will not, nay, can He? save a single soul  
 Which spurns His mercy, says I WILL to die.

Yet Mirza's curtain he essays to lift,  
 And show upon the lake fantastic shapes,\*  
 Not men alive as in old Dante's dream,  
 But figures simply—and he calls them so—  
 Sin's last reduction, folly's final forms ;  
 A moral, not material hell he draws ;  
 And art's fine spirit and his heart combine  
 To cool, if not to quench the awful flames !  
 Prophet of moral law, we him proclaim,  
 Who saw it, like an essence, piercing earth,  
 O'er-arching heaven, and underlying hell ;  
 Yea whither from its presence could he go ?  
 The universe appeared one mighty man—  
 Star-ribbed, star-robed, star-crowned, with suns for eyes.  
 Extravagant expression of the truth,  
 That man the image of th' Eternal is,  
 Ev'n as the dewdrop and the sun are framed  
 By the same powers and principles divine ;  
 Or as the fleeting clouds of summer eve,  
 Which seem to mimic mountains o'er their heads,  
 Are formed by the same method as the hills ;  
 These gravitation's work, and those her play ;  
 But all by her, and in the same way made ;  
 And that within the blaze and pomp of heaven  
 Beats a man's heart, as centre of the whole.  
 Just as amid the mystic wheels of old  
 A man's hand could be seen guiding their course,

\* See "Vision of Mirza."

And that God's dearest name Immanuel is ;  
A "Fifth Evangelist," we may not call,  
As many choose, that wise old Swedenborg ;  
Not with the old, but with the new he ranks.  
Call him the first ray of an unseen sun !  
Even as we oft have seen a shaft of light  
From a great battlement of morning cloud  
Shine sudden down upon a favoured vale,  
Shedding a little heaven below on earth ;  
And telling of a grander heaven above ;  
So all his dreams point to the *Coming Day* !

Since writing the above, the author has read, with intense interest, the "Life of Swedenborg," kindly sent him by its author, William White, Esq. Had he seen it sooner, it might have, in some points, modified portions of the above verses. In the main, however, he is glad to find that he has not materially misrepresented the great sage of Stockholm, whose machinery of ghosts and angels he dismisses like that of the "Iliad" or the "Koran," and at whose infallibility he laughs as he does at that of the Pope, but whose *spirit*, and many of whose views he profoundly admires, having found amidst much rubbish many mammoth nuggets, yea, lumps of most fine gold ! These Mr. White has collected with great skill and ability. If Swedenborg had lived now-a-days, given up his clumsy machinery, dismissed his body-guard of angels, closed down the hatches firmly on his devils, and condescended to work entirely as a philosophic divine, he would have been one of our foremost Christian sages.

BOOK NINTH.

NIGHT LOST IN DAY.

ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK.

COMMON Notions of the Night of Hell—A Moral Hell—The Three Days of Death—Earth and God—Heaven—The Millennium—Closing Vision, and Dialogue of the Stars.

## BOOK NINTH.

### NIGHT LOST IN DAY.

MEN deem there is a night within a night—  
A deeper gloom beyond those shadows dire,  
Which cover up, and carry ill men off ;  
And that this darkness never finds a morn  
So sing the solemn poets of the past,  
In strains of sorrow sweet, or grandeur stern.  
So Dante dips his foes in flaming tombs,  
Where rest, or resurrection, there is none ;  
So Milton hurls his angels from their thrones  
Into a sea of ever-burning fire ;  
So, even Shakspeare,\* sends the erring sprites  
On winds of restless torment round the world ;  
So others seem to dance, with fiendish glee,  
Upon the second death's dire sepulchre,

\* Even Shakspeare." See "Measure for Measure."

And the poor doomed ones who are prisoned there.  
Far other spirit let there breathe in us :  
Living in milder, though still twilight times,  
When men dare say they love the sinful man,  
While his offences, and his sins they hate,  
Can loathe the garments spotted by the flesh,  
Yet deeply pity him who wears the same ;  
Yet we, too, have a " vision of our own"  
Of sin, and hell forming the future night—  
No lake of literal fire before our view,  
Each billow bearing a lost soul within  
Tossing in torture, while a savage wind  
Stirs up the surge into intenser storm,  
That not one atom of the agony  
Be lost or mitigated in its force ;  
No range of hideous and scorching beds,  
Where wretches shriek for ever, " What's the hour ?"  
And hear the answer, "'Tis eternity !"  
No mountain range of darkness, where the lost,  
Like souls in dream, stumble o'er endless rocks,  
And cry aloud for an hour's rest in vain.  
No pit down which they fall, and fall, and fall,  
Jagged the sides with nails like those 'mid which  
Brave Regulus, the Roman, was enclosed—  
The atmosphere all flame—the bottom none !  
No vast infirmary with barrèd gates,  
Diseases raging, and physicians fled !



No city sacked in everlasting storm ;  
No burning bush of leaves, each leaf a soul,  
And all, though burning, ne'er to be consumed ;  
Such figures flash and vanish ; then we see  
Painted upon the dark, far other scene.

Most gorgeous world ! it seems at sudden sight  
Likest some city at high carnival,  
Or when illuminated in the joy  
Of a whole people's triumph, arches stand  
Across each street, flags float o'er ev'ry roof ;  
No sun, or moon, or stars, in that strange sky,  
But a great glare of artificial flame—  
A mighty ocean of luxurious light,  
Shed from transparencies ten thousand fold  
Shine in their stead ; so that this city, too,  
Like that above, no need hath of the sun,  
Its light, its laws, and everything its own !  
All rule, all form, and all restraint are gone :  
God hath abandoned it, and left it glad ;  
Conscience has vanished with the vanished world  
Enlightened selfishness now reigns alone  
O'er an untrammelled, gay, and glittering scene ;  
Its wine exhilarates, but injures not ;  
Its rose is thornless ; and its breezes soft,  
Complete the garden-feeling of the clime ;  
Its only duty lieth in delight ;

Its only search is for some pleasure new,  
Some fresh and far brought flower to bind the brow.  
Yet dance, and song, and exercise, and sport,  
Remove its life from languor, tinge its joy  
With varied, mixing, interchanging hues ;  
It is the sky of Sybarites, without  
Their sordid, dreaming, loathsome indolence ;  
It is the Arabian heaven without its lust—  
Civilization in consummate flower.  
Let us conceive, and call it *man made man* ;  
By his own will, and energy, and growth  
Death's vale is past ; the fear of hell is gone ;  
Shadows have vanished, both of good and ill ;  
No clouds, or dark, or bright, are in the sky ;  
Flows on the stream of sleep without its dreams ;  
Ideal mists are melted in the real ;  
And all this seems at first a perfect heaven—  
The heaven of men, and not of children vain.  
At first ! but ah ! that " first " abides not long,  
And soon they find it, what they dare not speak,  
No want without, but every want within,  
Fearless they may be, but are hopeless too :  
" All hope abandon, ye that enter here ;"  
They saw not as they passed, they feel it now ;  
Their sky has neither clouds nor firmament ;  
Their light is lukewarm, and their hearts are cold,  
And if the Parthian past has ceased to sting,

No splendid future opens to their view—  
Imagination's brilliant world has fled,  
And the great edging which eternity  
Gives to our thoughts at present, is extinct ;  
“ Things seen are now eternal ;” dismal thought !  
And “ things unseen,” expected are no more,  
Awhile before they know their misery ;  
And when the very thought of it comes up,  
Like some dark memory of night, they try  
To crush it as delusion. “ They are blest—  
They must, since all things which they like are theirs.”  
Yet still the void, the pang, the horrid dream  
Returns, and passes swift from heart to heart,  
Till in an awful hour, some one whose soul  
Had held to bursting his unfathomed woe,  
Even as that Spartan in his womb the fox,  
Can silence keep no more, but cries aloud,  
“ This heaven ! ah, no ! we are deceived, 'tis hell !  
My heart's a hell—and so are all our hearts.”  
And then ten thousand voices take it up,  
And cry in dreary chorus, “ This is hell—  
We find within us the undying worm,  
We see within us the eternal fire ;  
Nothing can fill the dismal void that's here ;  
Nothing can satisfy the horse-leech cry  
Of “ Give, give,” sounding aye within our souls.  
On couch of rest we weary—pleasure palls—

Forlorn and fatherless we feel ourselves,  
 And hopeless, prospectless, for evermore,  
 Even death's door shut against us in our face !  
 Fall on us mountains, cover us ye rocks !  
 O'erwhelm us darkness, or consume us fire !  
 Annihilation folds us in thine arms !  
 Anything rather than our wretched selves ;  
 These restless, selfish, satiated hearts  
 Prisoned without a dungeon—torn and rent  
 By real, though rackless torture, and by fires  
 Unseen consumed, to which thy torrid heat,  
 Gehenna, were a west wind's balmy breath !"  
 Oh ! can a direr hell be e'er conceived,  
 Or limned by demon painter, than is here ?  
 Of misery compounded out of bliss ;  
 Of man become his own tormentor, sole ;  
 And buried in himself, as in a pit  
 Without a bottom, and without a bound !

But this, too, is perchance only a dream,  
 And Mirza's veil may still remain unmoved ;  
 Meanwhile of day, and not of night we sing—  
 "Night lost in Day" becomes our gladsome theme ;  
 Aid us thou sun, through whom from God we came,  
 And from that height, whence now abroad thou look'st  
 Upon a landscape, which, like living form,  
 Turns toward thee, and battens on thy beams ;

Spare one of these strong, though autumnal rays  
Which make a second summer this blest year,\*  
To flash into our soul, to clear our gloom,  
To fill our hearts with light, even as the vales  
Thou fill'st, and as the mountain-tops are crowned.  
With glory by thy lavish bounty lent,  
So crown this poesy with quick'ning fire,  
And make it worthy of the subject high—  
The theme of light triumphant and supreme.  
Forget not that thy name Apollo was,  
And that thou still God's greatest poet art !

Three days of death, of earth, of God we sing,  
The light which breaks upon the soul set free,  
The light which earth shall wear upon her wings  
When she hath soared beyond her clouds of ill,  
And that Great Day, if e'er such day may break,  
When God himself shall close the night of things.

Fitly the ancient Hebrew sage has said,  
" Better the day of death than day of birth."  
Since death is day, not night—waking not sleep,  
(The night of death ! speak of the night of spring,  
The night of summer, noon, or autumn morn !)  
And since the joys and liberties of birth,  
Though man were born mature in mind and frame,  
Coming into his own like heir of age

\* September, 1865.

Were nothing to the grander joys of death  
When he becomes at last a living soul !

The Prince of Life of old majestic went,  
And calm into the room where slumbered death.  
Young death in likeness of a lovely maid,  
With groans and mournful music sounding near.  
He drowns the music, turns the minstrels out,  
And stands serene above the smiling corpse,  
Smiling as conscious of his presence there.  
And lo ! his look and tread have vanquished death  
Before his word and touch of power are given :  
First on it he breathes beauty and then life,  
And so the hope of immortality,  
Brought by his advent to this cold sad earth,  
Has gilded though not op'd the gloomy grave,  
Has softened though not slain the tyrant stern,  
Has hush'd the wailings, if not healed the woes,  
And brought forth loveliness, if not yet light.  
Away, ye whiners, leave a space around !  
Weep on, ye mourners, but with tears where hope  
Sparkles like bashful and but half-born joy !  
Ye doubters clear your brows and look below,  
Wipe off the coffin like dark mote from th' eye,  
And see the shroud, rather the robe within,  
Revealing the full majesty of death ;  
For all men like all monarchs sleep in state,

And 'tis a coronet these cold brows wear,  
And see how sunbeams play upon the tomb,  
And flowers and blooming branches rise above,  
And seem the dead translated as they grow,  
And from the margin of the grisly grave  
Just as the corpse is lowèred often springs  
The lively lark, and pours a melody  
To the May sun as though the spirit there  
Were triumphing incarnate o'er the tomb,  
And on its way to realms of endless life  
Were leaving this fine strain for legacy—  
Mottoes ! what need of mottoes or of texts,  
While the wind sings resurget, and the grass  
Fulfil in part the chanted prophecy,  
And death lies drowned in beauty and in hope ?  
Churchyards of earth how beautiful they are,  
“God's” gorgeous “acres” full of life, not death,  
Triumphs be sure of immortality.  
No gems about the brow of earthlike graves,  
No fields of glory like the fields of death !  
And whither, tell us, doth the spirit fly ?  
Among yon lofty stars perhaps we go  
When death has shut our earthly eyes in gloom,  
And opened wide like “eyelids of the morn”  
Of our immortal nature the strong gaze.  
It may be so—no tongue of man can tell,  
Or as some subtle thinkers have averred,

Perhaps man's heaven and hell are nearer him  
Than all the matter of the stellar worlds.  
IN him he carries his immensities,  
And when his little hour on earth is o'er  
He dives, not soars, into the spirit day !  
Let judgment on these doubtful points be dumb,  
And let imagination in its stead  
Awaking look into these dim seen worlds !

Like morning dream the visible departs,  
Sun, moon, the earth, and human face divine ;  
But first, before the world has past away,  
Like twinkling of an eye man's past life comes.  
Its every hour and instant virtues, crimes,  
Realities and dreams, actions and words,  
Things long forgotten by his memory,  
Things only known of himself and heaven,  
As from God's own judgment-book transcribed,  
Stand round revealed\* in one quick lightning glance ;  
And thus for once the eternal Now of God,  
Himself seems mirrored on the human soul  
Ev'n as the darkness of a summer day,  
Ere it descends in rain and levin fire,  
Brings out the landscape with unearthly power,  
Shows every blade of grass, and leaf of tree,  
And wave of water, wing of bird at once,

\* See De Quincey's remarkable statement about this psychological fact.



As though the eye omniscience had received.  
And then a black veil droppeth on the whole—  
So with the lucid momentary space,  
Between the present and the future worlds.  
How vivid seems the shore against the sea !  
The very sand-mark on the ocean's verge,  
Like a dropt sun ray sheds a light intense  
In contrast with the fathomless abyss,  
And life ne'er lovelier nor greater seems  
Than when the man is leaving it for aye.  
Even moments then seem larger than themselves,  
Like the raised letters of the reading blind.  
Each year appears a past eternity,  
And never does the *unity* of life  
Seem half so real as when its thread is cut.  
Its length, its breadth, its vast variety,  
And boundless value in one flash come out,  
And in that rapid flash they disappear.  
Hence Madame Roland stops upon her way  
To direst doom, to wish she could write down  
The strange wild thoughts careering through her soul.  
Hence Schiller cries, "How many things are now  
Becoming plain and clear to me in death !"

And is there aught beyond but darkness blank ?  
Yes ! and as one dipping beneath the wave  
Finds a new world at once expand around,

New shapes, new sounds, new shades, new radiance,  
So with the diver\* in the deep of death.  
The stars have vanished, but in space he dwells  
As in a temple of which stars themselves  
Were but the glitt'ring spires and minarets.  
Old outward forms are gone, but in the springs  
And essences of things he revels now.  
The earth is fled, but there are opened up  
New worlds beneath the surface where not gold,  
Nor Parian marble, but the light of light  
Poureth a brilliant and endless day.  
The sun has set, but glory has arisen,  
The ancient heavens have past, the new are here,  
The living walk by faith, the dead by sight—  
A sight which sees now nothing but the real,  
For all of semblance though existing still  
Exists as now to us those strange dim worlds,  
Which microscopic vision has revealed.  
Those "spiritual creatures" who in "myriads"  
"Walk on the earth," or gyrate through the air  
Become apparent to the spirit eye,  
As are the moths, the butterflies of night.  
When sudden light enters a twilight room  
All things and beings that exist are seen  
As the soul prosecutes her endless way.  
All save the Eternal Infinite I AM,

\* Young says, "We dive in death."

And He is felt though seen he cannot be,  
Felt as the blind feel a commanding form  
Is in the room beside them by the sound,  
Which like the wind of a great "going" waves,  
Felt too within through his all-loving smile,  
Which warms the dwellings of the happy dead,  
And seen in Him the Prince of Life, who stands  
Between the souls and God, and guides them on  
Through pastures ever fresh and fountains new,  
And he the while alone with open face  
Beholds the very glory of the Lord,  
And blanches not, nor turns his eyes away.

Day shines around these disembodied ones,  
But day, oh ! how unlike the days of earth,  
A day in which the light is ne'er the same,  
But waxing ever into fairer hues,  
With light becoming brighter every hour,  
Yet seeming softer as it brighter grows,  
A day in which the intellect beneath  
The mild clear azure strengthens and expands,  
And what it once could only dream about.  
Now *sees* the reasons for the earth's dark state,  
The deep necessity there was for sin,  
The meaning and the glory of the fall,  
The pathos sweet and interest intense,  
Which evil to the universe has lent,

So that like apple-trees which bloom on graves  
The full-blown glory of the heavenly worlds  
Is part corruption's bright consummate flower,  
Yet feel they always in that better land  
That the whole truth is not at once revealed,  
That like the clouds of a Peruvian sky  
A shaded glory shines—the sun is hid,  
And hid in case intolerable light  
Should burst before the time, and blast the eye.  
Hence faith and hope continue still to act,  
For even now a section of God's ways  
Like a young jagged moon is only seen,  
And faith and hope must round the perfect sphere,  
Crowded with souls the region is, and friends  
With friends innumerable rapture join ;  
And here indeed is joy beyond a joy,  
To meet in that strange world with those we knew.  
The "old familiar faces" perfect made,  
More beautiful the beautiful become,  
The true become like Christ, "the truth itself,"  
So that they will not, dare not, cannot lie,  
The intelligent so deeply wise and strong,  
That their whole being seems one flaming eye,  
And those we knew as coldly kind on earth,  
Now burning like young seraphs in their love.  
Changed our dear friends, but seeming still the same,  
As when they ran with us among the fields,

Or bathed with us in summer's lukewarm streams,  
Or foot for foot the hill of learning climbed,  
Or saw the wonderlands of poetry  
Rise on the firmament like autumn stars ;  
Changed only as are faces in the moon,  
Which she transfigures with her magic ray,  
Till they appear sweet pictures of themselves—  
How fine to scan the past without a sigh,  
To feel its joys, to face its woes again ;  
From out the first to wring the ling'ring drops,  
Which lurk like dew in a deep rose's breast ;  
And from the other, as by alchymy,  
Draw forth from the dark dross the gleaming gold.  
How fine to sound ev'n old forgiven sins,  
Extinct volcanoes ! for the good they did,  
And the rich residue they left behind.  
To dream out ancient trials to their depth,  
Then, in the crisis of the agony,  
To wake and feel, " Thank God ! they're past—we're  
here !"

How sweet to see our long-forgotten thoughts—  
Pure dreams—bright visions—aspirations high—  
Revived and registered in living light ;  
To see our past spread out like a great map,  
And mark the plan of God guiding it all,  
So that though a way-faring man and fool,  
We have not erred but reached our Father's house,

To meet our enemies as well as friends,  
And take their hands for the first time in heaven ;  
And wish for tears, all long since wiped away,  
To empty out our feelings when we think  
We injured them so much in judgment once,  
Nor did them justice till they need it not ;  
To meet those friends through birth and blood, of  
whom

We heard from other friends, but never saw—  
Or knew—but from their old quaint portraitures,  
And trace the family stream up to its fount,  
Through its meanderings 'mid the hills of God !  
To meet with famous men once great on earth,  
Now greater humbler on the plains of heaven ;  
To meet old Socrates and Plato sage,  
Who from their towering but snow-covered peaks,  
Saw Christ's day from afar off, and were glad,  
To see the galaxy of ancient seers :  
Elijah and Elisha met again ;  
Moses and Aaron set on deathless hills ;  
David and Jonathan once more like twins,  
Exchanging hearts, recalling memories ;  
And lo ! in threefold cord infrangible,  
Elihu, Job, and Eliphaz entwined ;  
Isaiah his dire death and sufferings  
Forgot, with his old foe Manasseh walks,  
With tearless Jeremiah too beside ;

And meet with Malachi—last of his race—  
Who came to curse, but who remains to bless ;  
And see in wond'rous paradox of love,  
Peter and Paul, like children hand in hand,  
Pass ; and without one pang of envy see,  
John leaning still upon his Saviour's breast,  
Like Mercury on bosom of the Sun !  
To see the infants in that happy land,  
Babes snatch'd up early from their mothers' breasts,  
And with the smiles wherewith they welcomed  
    death ;  
Upon their happy faces shining still—  
To feel that all in infancy who died  
Are here, and children still, though grown to God.  
And wiser than the wisest saint on earth,  
To see how many from asylum cells,  
Abortive wombs, and idiotic dream,  
Have entered safe the land of heavenly light,  
And met with reason and with God at once—  
To find that thousands in the hour of death  
Have sought for mercy and have mercy found,  
Attested by a wond'rous holy joy,  
Which came like music o'er their parting souls ;  
To see the vast and blissful multitude,  
Countless as ocean's sand, as forest leaves,  
From every people, kindred, class, and age.  
All lands and tribes and tongues assembled here,

Through the attraction of Christ's powerful love ;  
 Some who had never heard of heaven before ;  
 Some who had, in their honest ignorance,  
 Expected to find there few but themselves ;  
 Some who had lived and died in fear of hell,  
 And who are wond'ring why they're here at all—  
 To hear the question, " Shall there few be saved ?"  
*Now* answered by a loud and swelling NO !  
 Heard—like the thunder of some organ-world,  
 Throughout the wide immensity of space !

Not all their exercise consists of song,  
 For song is but the breath of act and power,  
 And were these ended soon would die away,  
 Or sink into a dull unmeaning sound.  
 The noblest song on earth comes from the tread  
 Of heroes marching on in freedom's cause ;  
 Or meek philanthropists, from door to door,  
 Passing to bless their brethren of mankind.  
 How musical and beautiful such steps,  
 Like sunbeams walking on the mountain tops !  
 And so, from heaven's work and heaven's fight—  
 For fight and work shall still continue there—  
 Divinest melody there doth arise,  
 Sweeter than from all dulcimers and harps ;  
 Sweet as the music of angelic wings,  
 Speeding on their swift errands through the sky !



Pursue their studies now, the blest can do  
Without, or let, or tedium, or pause ;  
Eternity their leisure, heaven their light,  
And hope and joy their inspiration strong.  
The dreadful doom—" He that in knowledge grows,  
Grows too in sorrow"—now is all repealed ;  
For love, and lore, and happiness are one,  
And one the trees of knowledge and of life !  
To know becomes a growth like that of spring :  
Swift, silent, eager, as if budding flowers  
Knew they were budding, felt the sunshine sweet,  
And had but one desire, to grow for ever.  
No check or chill on their perpetual path  
Have these blest souls, no fainting weariness,  
No problems like black marble standing up,  
And frowning, Hitherto no farther come !  
No gusts of passion blowing back the fruit  
Of knowledge, dropping like autumnal winds,  
Which guard the summit of some loaded tree,  
No prejudice behind the onward search,  
Like sour duenna following a maid,  
Demure and spying, scowling, pulling back,  
No dogma, like harsh thunder, heard before,  
Between the high steep crags which gird the path,  
And shouting, " Stop ! this is the pass to hell !"  
But a fine music, as from Mirza's hill,  
And an unseen performer sweetly sounds

A chorus to the ever-onward march,  
And "Follow me!" its burden always is ;  
And o'er the road a rainbow bendeth still,  
And thus in melody and beauty both  
Knowledge advances through the peaceful years.

Two thoughts at intervals their happy souls,  
Bedim like shadows on a mountain lake,  
Or those soft melancholy dreams at times  
Which make the beauty of a woman's brow  
Diviner than an angel's, born of love !  
One is the thought of earth's dark present state,  
Still bathed in blood and still baptized in tears,  
Unseen indeed, but really rolling on,  
Its ancient path of sorrow and of sin,  
Sowing the wind, reaping the whirlwind still ;  
Dark-spotted planet ringed with wrath and woe !  
The other of the spirits they have missed,  
And listened for, but they have never come,  
And still they wait and sigh and listen on,  
When one day an angelic voice is heard,  
" Possess your souls in patience and in hope,  
Meanwhile I roll away the clouds of night,  
And show you what the earth shall yet become !"

Behold the gradual dawning of the day,  
The last and loveliest of the days of earth,

Day of the thousand or the million years ;  
Long has that day been coming but not come !  
We think upon a watcher of the skies,  
Waiting for morn upon a lofty hill,  
The moon arises, shines her peaceful hour,  
But sheds no daylight from her pallid brow ;  
Then Mars, his broad dim targe lifts in the south,  
But Mars, that blood-red orb, is not the morn—  
He sets—and flashes forth the Milky Way,  
With those mysterious arms sparkling with stars ;  
But still the dawn is distant—every drop  
Of that spilt golden splendour is a sun ;  
But none of all these suns can bring our day.  
Next come the Pleiads, with their weeping looks ;  
And then Orion, in his haughty might,  
But drag the day behind even he cannot ;  
Jove next, belated, in his rise appears,  
But though the Prince of Night, he's not the morn ;  
Saturn uplifts his sullen, lonely lamp,  
But Saturn, though a god, is not the sun ;  
Then meteors flash and vanish, but no dawn.  
Then lo ! a sudden glory in the east,  
As if a new orb were that moment made,  
Or new coin struck from the great mint of God,  
It is ! it is ! the bright and morning star !  
Lucifer, fairest of the starry host,  
But though he prophecies the morning near,

The morning star, alas ! is not the morn.  
But now the purple clouds begin to flush,  
Creeps next a rim of yellow lustre in,  
Then like two golden horns shoot up the rays,  
Which tell that day is near—then see the sun  
Rises and looks at the all-blushing earth,  
Like a strong bridegroom on a timid bride ;  
And now the watcher, silent all night long,  
Can silence keep no more, but cries, “ The day !  
And day-star risen upon my weary heart ! ”

Thus for two thousand years the Christian world  
Has waited, panted, prayed, and wept for morn ;  
Came Pentecost, with all its cloven fires,  
Its mystic voices, and its rushing wind,  
But like a wind or voice it passed away ;  
Paul sprang through death to life, through gloom to  
light,  
And in his Saviour’s cause ran, wrestled, died,  
And made the West confess that Christ was God ;  
But Paul, nor Christ, nor Christ’s forerunner was,  
For Christ whole ages longed and cried in grief,  
Like darkling children weary for the dawn,  
And many came to answer the wild cry.  
The comet came, but came without the Christ,  
The earthquake came, but brought not near the Lord ;  
The giant steed of pestilence and death

Along the trembling stage rode riderless ;  
Darkened the heaven to intensest gloom,  
But the prophetic lightning shone not there ;  
Soared up the eagles through the silent sky  
To meet the glory which descended not.  
False prophets ran about like winds gone mad,  
Circling false Christs, who rose and sank like clouds ;  
But still the heavens retained their glorious guest,  
Till when instead of Christ came Antichrist,  
Deluded millions hailed him as their king,  
And with the false one sought to soothe the hearts  
Which had been yearning, breaking for the true.  
The horrid spell of idol-worship snapt  
At the great Luther's word, the graves were burst,  
And the long-buried Christian genius woke,  
But Christ came not to bless or crown his brow.  
The harp of Milton wailed and prayed for Him,  
Nay, tuned itself at times to hail His rise,  
But melted not, nor moved the iron heavens ;  
The Church from trance arose and stretch'd her  
    hands  
To save the millions of the heathen world ;  
The while the Atheist power God's name blasphemed,  
And wrote in blood, Death's an eternal sleep,  
And Christ might smile, or sigh, but came not down.  
Eyes then were seen, dim with prophetic search,  
Raised up from the old page to the old sky

In prayer that He, the long-lost, should return.  
And one strong spirit,\* full of faith and love,  
Sought by the suction of his mighty heart,  
And arms instinct with ardour—winged with prayer—  
To draw Him down from His serene abode,  
Reminding Him that the set time was come.  
But all was darkness on the mountain tops,  
No tumult in the clouds, no stir of stars,  
And to the seer there came a whispered voice  
Which said, “No man of that great hour or day  
Knoweth, or can know, not the Son himself,”  
And at the whisper his crush’d heart grew chill.  
Next year† I see upon a thousand hills  
A thousand watchers stand and look above  
For the appearance of the coming King ;  
But though innumerable woes should come,  
Diseases rage, and comets glare in wrath,  
Nations be angry, blood in torrents pour,  
Cradles be rocked by earthquake, cities burn,  
Volcanoes wild shed loose their fiery locks,  
Yet still the sky which has received shall keep ;  
And still the dial of eternity  
Pointeth not, trembling, to that mystic hour.  
Slowly at last the truth begins to dawn  
Upon the Church, loth ever to accept

\* “Strong spirit.” Edward Irving.

† 1867.

The truth too soon, that Christianity,  
Not Christ, may be expected to return.  
Hers the avatar all these figures meant,  
Powerless in part the Church now through her faults,  
Her ignorance, her bigotry, and pride,  
Her insulation 'mid the glorious world,  
A haunting ghost, not a pervasive power ;  
Believed, as we believe, the central earth,  
With a cold, callous, listless, fruitless faith ;  
Loved, as we love, the lands we never saw,  
With a vague, languid, unproductive love ;  
Felt, as we feel, the pressure of a dream  
Upon our waking brow and eyelids dull  
Of a dim thing, a dimmer memory—  
Now sleeping, she in trance of torpor cold,  
Now tossed like autumn tree 'tween divers winds,  
Awake in torture and in doubtful strife—  
Still living, but with life which threatens oft  
To issue forth indignant, and to seek,  
Finding, or fashioning some other shape ;  
Perplexed with fears, mad with uncertainty—  
Once lording it a queen o'er earth and heaven,  
But cowering now in fear 'mid all her pomp,  
Lest the sun smite, sky fall, sea drown, earth gape,  
Or stars dart arrows of devouring fire ;  
And all because she knoweth not her time,  
Nor where, like Samson, her great strength doth lie ;

Nor dares in earnest effort strip herself  
Of all that weakens and encumbers now.  
Her traffic with the princes of the earth ;  
Her harsher dogmas, and her narrower creeds,  
Beggarly and belated elements !—  
Her fierce, fanatic, persecuting zeal,  
Her hatred to the rising sciences,  
And true philosophies of modern days ;  
Her vain attempts to pump up force from wells  
Long dead and empty in the wilderness ;  
To follow wisps, and start at every cry  
Of “Lo, he’s here,” or, “Nay, but he is there !”  
Her enmity to progress and research ;  
All this she must as cumbrous baggage leave,  
And rise to meet a grander destiny.  
And of the future form the noble Church,  
Truly “a glorious Church, with wrinkle none,  
Nor spot, nor blemish, nor aught else that’s ill.”

A Church eclectic, purged from fear and hate,  
Leaning on science, loving letters well ;  
Her brow baptized from Castalic’s clear fount,  
Moving to lofty music as from heaven ;  
Philosophy and faith met ’neath her roof  
Never to part again, more than the sky  
From earth shall sever at the horizon line ;  
Fearlessly list’ning to the rush of thought



And sweep of science, as to cataracts  
Heard from afar coming to join her stream,  
And to roll on in her embrace for ever.  
Fair as the moon in her exceeding love ;  
Clear as the sun in her completed truth ;  
Terrible as a bannered host to sin,  
Error, and darkness in their thousand forms ;  
Church of the Cross and bleeding heart of Christ,  
Yet hopeful, lovely, beaming as a bride.  
To her, as to a star, the nations look,  
The feeble Pagan faiths before her fall ;  
The Crescent comes and sits upon her brow ;  
The Atheist recognizes God in her,  
And finds it is a luxury to kneel ;  
The Virgin Mother fades before her face,  
Like witch of Alpine waterfall in morn ;  
In light of her pure eyes vice melts away ;  
Hatred and envy wither in her breath ;  
The energies of earth her bidding do ;  
The ship her wings, the telegraph her wires,  
Lend for her messages of power and love ;  
War, like a wounded lion, licks her feet ;  
Her smile is liberty, her finger law.  
The world beneath her sway is one as heaven,  
Yet hardly knows she rules, so meek her power ;  
All soft and soundless as the clasping air.  
The wilderness doth blossom as a rose ;

The city and the country are the same ;  
The earth's one garden, and its goodliest beds  
Are graves, for death is dreaded now no more ;  
Its secret still retained, its terrors gone ;  
And though no voice is heard, no angel seen,  
Nothing but the old still eternal laws,  
Yet through the nations, like electric thrill,  
The feeling runs ; the kingdoms of the world  
Are now the kingdoms of the Lord and Christ,  
And finished is the mystery of God.

How lovely, in that better time, is night !  
It is as if some shower of heavenly dew  
Had dropt upon and burnished up the stars,  
Which look so holy and so happy now,  
As if for the first time they saw on earth  
That beaming glory we behold in them,  
And hailed in her for the first time a star !  
Infant of God, born from the womb of ill,  
Adopted in the family of heaven,  
And fed upon a galaxy of smiles,  
Earth now appears unto the full-orbed Jove,  
The glitt'ring Venus, and the patient moon ;  
And night becomes one look of down-bent  
    love,  
As though the joy of angels o'er this sheep  
Restored to God's own fold, were gleaming there ;

The while men gaze aloft and see the Lyre \*  
Inclose the Pole-star in its burning strings,  
And hail the signal that the reign of song,  
Of harmony, and love, has now begun ;  
So that thy great year Plato has revolved,  
And all things have become for ever new !

A higher vision comes upon my soul,  
But comes in glimpses from behind a veil,  
So that I see but dimly, faintly speak,  
And feel that I, perchance, but fondly dream.  
For vision, not for dogma, let it stand,  
Yet, would to God, that I believe it could !  
Upon a hill I spent a long bright day,  
I saw the sun rise, waving past the clouds,  
Which hid from him a harvest-loaded vale,  
Inclosed amidst a round of rugged hills.  
I bore the burden of his noonday heat,  
And of the weird and awful silence too ;  
The witching time of noon, when ghosts were wont  
To walk as fearless on the lonely hills  
As in the thickest shades of dusky night ;  
No sound, save a near torrent's muffled voice,  
Which seemed to deepen and mete out the calm  
As though mine ear it stole and trickled on ;

\* "The Lyre." A star in the Lyre is, as astronomers say, yet to be the Pole-star for a thousand years.

I saw, when the noon's point was past, the clouds  
Lift their aspiring fronts and gird the sun,  
To drink or to defy his lessened light ;  
While through them still his shafts came flashing down  
To steep in glory some elected spots ;  
Here the soft bosom of a heathy hill,  
Yonder a bashful mountain's summit far,  
And there again a waterfall in flood.  
I waited till these clouds were all dissolved,  
Drunk up into the hot and thirsty day ;  
And the sun stood at heaven's western gate  
Alone, as the first hour that God him made,  
And shining with, methought, the soul of light—  
The molten glory of a hundred suns—  
And the dark mountains, and the wingèd woods,  
And smoking cots, seemed gazing all at him,  
As though they sought to melt into his beams,  
And follow him on his immortal way.  
I saw when he had set one star flash out,  
Leaping into the vacant, glowing sky,  
And, then, his brethren in their courses came ;  
The while a breeze awoke, touching the trees,  
The ferns, and heather, into harmony,  
And soothed me into slumber, deep and soft.  
Starred straightway by the strangest of all dreams !  
Methought upon a mountain still I stood,  
But barer, higher, nearer to the heavens ;

And midnight now had come upon the world—  
 A winter midnight, too, with wealth of stars—  
 Hushed all the sky, and all the earth appeared  
 With superhuman awe which quelled my soul,  
 So that I felt that but to speak one word  
 Were profanation and perdition too ;  
 Nay, felt as if all sounds had spoke their last,  
 And silence and immensity were one ;  
 Till there began—and, as I heard, the hair  
 Of my flesh crept, and stood erect with fear,  
 Wonder, and doubt—this

DIALOGUE 'MONG THE STARS.

FIRST STAR.

BROTHER, why gloomest thou across the deep ?  
 Will nothing ever clear thy sombre brow ?  
 If thou hadst tears, I see that thou would'st weep.  
 Answer, and tell me why and wherefore now  
 All worlds and firmaments, save thee, seem glad ?  
 The earth herself with love and peace is clad.

SECOND STAR.

I see a sight hidden from thee for ever,  
 And hear such sounds as thou canst never hear ;  
 A sight and sounds which through my being quiver,  
 A burden heavier than thou could'st bear ;  
 In utmost north a lonely world I see,  
 Th' abode of everlasting agony !

## FIRST STAR.

Thy starry shield protects me from the sight,  
 Yet in thy truth of vision I believe ;  
 But can there be such wretched world in Night,  
 Where the lost beings never do receive  
 One gleam of blessedness, one ray of grace,  
 And never do behold their Father's face ?

## SECOND STAR.

Remotest of the many orbs of heaven,  
 In fiery darkness I behold it swim ;  
 From intercourse with other worlds riven,  
 Save when the comet pays it visit grim,  
 Or wingèd seraph, with an eye of care,  
 Skirts in its shudd'ring flight its lurid air.  
 A populous place it is, that woe-struck world,  
 And many modes of wrath and misery  
 Surround the doomed ones who to it were hurled  
 To feel it is an agony to be.  
 All the old sorrows of the earth are there,  
 With one dread element besides—Despair !  
 And yet, at times, when shine some glimm'ring hopes  
 Crossing their weary spirits, they repair  
 To the red summit of their mountain tops,  
 And look across the dark and laden air,  
 And wait the rising of some joyful day  
 In which their griefs and pains shall pass away.  
 It never dawns ! although they shriek aloud,  
 And tear their hair, and shout for it to come ;  
 The more they cry, the deeper falls the cloud,  
 And, doubly damned, at last they seek their home—  
 HOME ! what a mockery the word seems there,

The home of horror and renewed despair !  
Perpetual thunders o'er that region roar,  
And lightnings never cease their livid play ;  
Torrents for ever round these lost ones pour,  
Nor the sad earthly solace e'er have they  
To feel that custom reconciles to doom,  
For wrath seems ever deepening its gloom.  
Terrors o'er terrors stand on tiptoe here,  
Like far volcanoes over snowy hills ;  
One greatest torment is perpetual fear  
Of future, direr, more consuming ills ;  
The outer darkness is their dwelling now,  
But that the *outmost* cometh, well they know.  
Not half so fierce the wrath that round them burns,  
Lashing them with a scourge of reddest rays,  
As when, from time to time, their memory turns  
And broods on early, vanished, happy days.  
The roar of burning floods within their ears  
Less dread than voices of the past appears ;  
The hymn of mother in the evening mild,  
The song of streams upon the Sabbath morn,  
The chirp of bird, and prattle sweet of child ;  
Such sounds as these upon their souls return,  
Finding and stirring up strange gulphs of grief  
From which the sharpest torture were relief ;  
And sweetest faces bend o'er them for aye,  
The blooming maidens of their early love,  
Unaltered by the finger of decay,  
And shining cherubs from the lands above ;  
For hell's fierce woe were not complete unless  
THERE SHONE ABOVE A HOPELESS GLIMPSE OF  
BLISS.

One element of horror is not theirs  
 As yet—the sight of God—their Judge's face ;  
 To meet the frown He on His forehead wears  
 They dread more than the fires of their “ own place ;”  
 And when they sleep 'tis of that face they dream,  
 And wake in sweltering awe, with shudd'ring scream.  
 Sleep is no balsam in these wretched realms,  
 But a variety of torment's might ;  
 'Tis feared, and when it comes it doubly whelms  
 Their souls, and crushes every hope of light,  
 Making of moments an eternity,  
 And ages out of hours of agony.  
 But all words fail me to describe the sight  
 Which I am doomed for some strange cause to bear ;  
 Sole wretched one of all the sons of night,  
 So that my brow thus furrowed is with care,  
 And that my voice in the great general song  
 To heaven's Lord swelling hath been silent long ;  
 These red and wrathful pinnacles which rise,  
 Piercing the darkness of the thunder clouds,  
 And shoot their horrid lustre up the skies,  
 Clothed, too, at times, with the tormented crowds,  
 Dart through my heart, as if I damned, too, were,  
 And cast on me the shade of their despair.

A pause in the strange song ! but how my heart  
 Bled as I saw the interchange of grief  
 Which blanked the eyes of both these lustrous ones,  
 These “ giant angels,” dwelling in the stars !  
 I felt that, like a plague, the sorrow strong  
 Would storm across the universe of worlds  
 And change their gladness into groans and sighs ;



Till, gazing at the second star, methought  
His aspect changed, his brow began to clear,  
And, then, his voice briefly broke forth again.  
(And, with its music in my ear, I woke  
Under the roof of midnight's gleaming heavens,  
And home, with deep conflicting thoughts, repaired.)

## SECOND STAR.

O, brother star, what sight is this I see?  
The lost world rolling into distant space,  
Dissolving, like a cloud, as it doth flee,  
So that no more mine eye can find its place.  
Most strange, if hell at last has past away,  
And left behind it UNIVERSAL DAY!

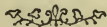


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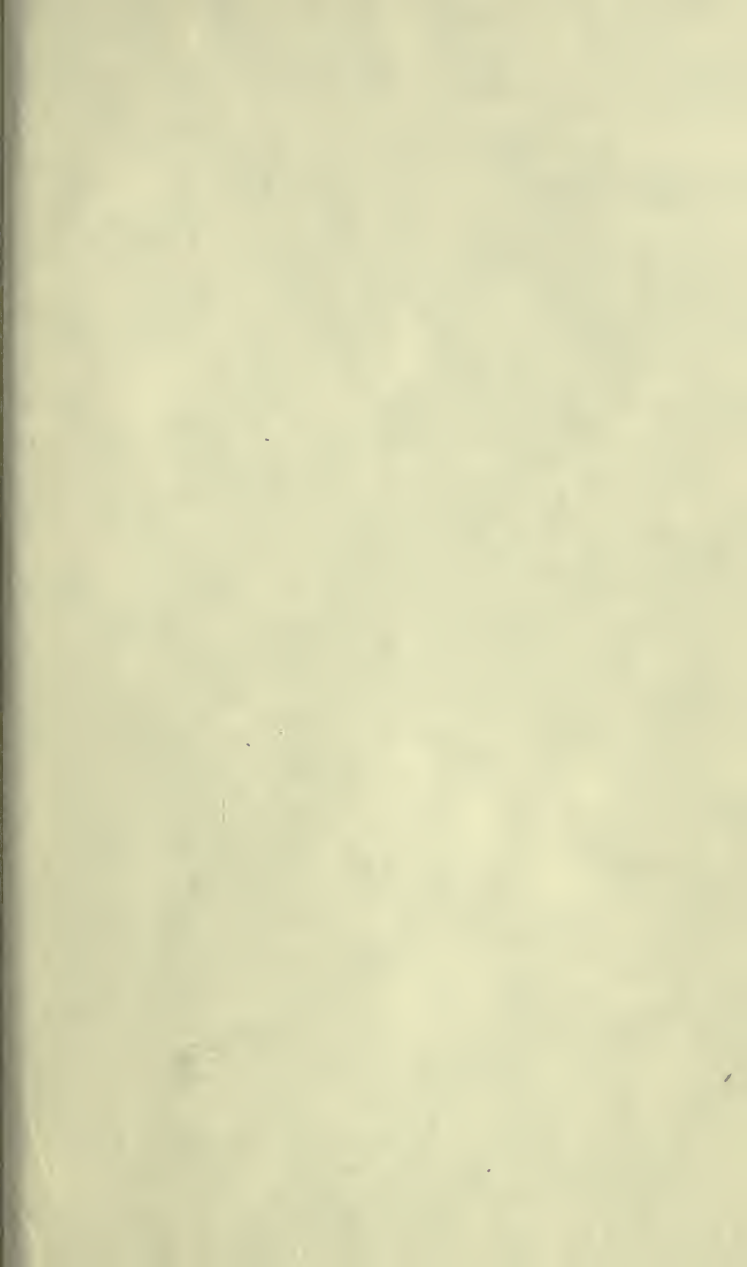
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